

The Pentagon's  
superiority  
complex

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# IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 16, NO. 17

MARCH 25-31, 1992

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Scenes  
from  
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Craig Charney

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# The NSA goes to school under veil of secrecy

By Andrea Barnett

MISSOULA, MONT.

While searching through the University of Montana's (UM) budget last fall, I was surprised to find that the liberal arts college has a \$2,000 teaching and research grant with the Department of Defense.

But I was even more surprised when a UM administrator came right out and told me that the school has a research contract with the National Security Agency (NSA). Not only does the NSA try to keep its contracts secret but it is unusual for a bureaucrat to be so forthcoming.

The UM-NSA contract is projected to last through June 1994 and cost up to \$203,620. Like most NSA-sponsored research, the UM contract is with the mathematics department.

The contract includes a non-disclosure clause that prohibits the university from announcing the award or sponsorship of the agreement and forbids the release of any information regarding the government's interest in the project.

Montana state law and a 23-year-old UM Faculty Senate resolution prohibit classified research at the university. The state law probably does not apply because the results of the research will supposedly be published freely.

But the senate resolution, passed in 1969 in response to the Pentagon's "Project Themis," which funded 43 classified military research projects at 35 schools, conflicts with the secrecy of the contract.

"All scholarly activity and research on this campus shall be openly arrived at and the faculty shall be free to publish or not as each individual faculty member sees fit. The only restrictions on the activity of publication and disclosure are those voluntarily imposed by the faculty member in exercising his [sic] professional judgment and discretion."

The purpose of the UM research, according to the contract, is to "expand the use of the greatest deviation correlation coefficient  $R_g$  into the multiple linear regression model" and "develop a general framework of regression techniques."

In plain language, this means the project director, UM math Professor Rudy Gideon, is trying to "develop techniques for exploring the relationship of many random quantities," says NSA spokesman Jerry Volker.

"The agency does a lot of work with colleges and universities that aims to improve, if we can, mathematics," he adds. "It's a skill we need very badly."

The War Research Information Service (WRIS) in Cambridge, Mass., runs a non-profit information clearinghouse

about military research contracts. WRIS Director Rich Cowan says it is unusual for an NSA contract to be discovered at all. As a result, WRIS has little information about NSA-sponsored research.

Cowan says the information contained in the UM contract is not sufficient to explain the nature of the research, but that it probably has something to do with "voice recognition." Much of the NSA's math research is used for encoding and code-breaking.

The NSA was established in 1952 by a seven-page order of President Harry S. Truman, as a surveillance and intelligence-gathering organization, with its roots in the government's code-breaking brigades of World Wars I and II.

The agency's mission, Volker says, is to collect "foreign intelligence information" and to coordinate "highly specialized technical functions in support of U.S. government activities."

"The agency is essentially the premier technical spy agency we have," says Greg LeRoy, director of Public Search in Houston, Texas, a non-profit organization that keeps track of military and defense research contracts.

**Above the law:** According to James Bamford, author of *The Puzzle Palace*, there are no laws prohibiting the NSA from engaging in any activity. Unlike the CIA, which was established by Congress and operates under legal restrictions that included prohibitions against operating within the U.S. and assassinating foreign leaders, the NSA has no legal mandate.

In fact, the only laws the NSA must follow are those that restrict the release of information about the agency.

"In addition to being free of legal restrictions, the NSA has technological capabilities for eavesdropping beyond imagination," Bamford writes in *The Puzzle Palace*. "Such capabilities once led former Senate Intelligence Committee member Walter F. Mondale to point to the NSA as possibly the single most important source of intelligence for this nation."

In 1962, the NSA began monitoring U.S. citizens on its "watch list," Bamford says. By 1970, then-President Richard Nixon approved the "Domestic Intelligence Gathering Plan: Analysis and Strategy," which, among other things, allowed for NSA electronic surveillance of "individuals and groups in the United States who pose a major threat to internal security," and "surreptitious entry" or breaking and entering into "facilities occupied by subversive elements."

Cowan says the WRIS believes that the NSA uses its massive electronic surveillance capabilities for "eavesdropping on political groups in the U.S. that are opposed to government policy."

**Big black budget:** According to LeRoy, the NSA is reported to have the largest budget within the U.S. intelligence community—more than the FBI and CIA combined.

LeRoy says the NSA's budget takes up an estimated \$12 billion of the country's \$350 billion defense and national security budget.

The agency gets its money from the government's "Black Budget," the contents of which are kept hidden even from Congress. According to Tim Weiner's book, *Blank Check*, that budget, which pays for secret defense and intelligence operations, stood at approximately \$34 billion in fiscal year 1990.

"The research at UM may not be that insidious," Cowan says, "but the fact that it's connected to a budget that's accountable to no one, and used for a lot of purposes that are not in the public interest, should be of some concern."

Both LeRoy and Volker say that NSA contracts with universities are fairly common.

"You'd be hard-pressed to find a large well-run state university that doesn't have a portion of its science and research funding from defense and intelligence agencies," LeRoy says.

Volker says the number of schools with NSA contracts would comprise a "decent-sized list," including Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the University of Kansas, Ohio State University and schools in the California university system.

The money for the UM contract came from funds reserved for "historically black colleges and universities," Volker says. "This institution [UM] qualifies because it has a significant number of minority employees."

Only 5.36 percent of UM's faculty, however, are minorities.

LeRoy is critical of military research at universities, saying the enormous amount of money spent for such research perverts the ability of academics to pursue underfunded but non-military studies.

"At MIT, for example, in certain fields, over 90 percent of the research is financed by [military-related] groups," he says. "This overwhelmingly limits who gets access to computers and research materials."

A second drawback to military research, especially contracts with the NSA, is that military interests take precedence over academic inquiry, and professors are often forced to submit their work to the government for censorship if they want to publish it.

Professors and students working on these projects often must pass a security clearance and sign a statement promising to submit anything they might publish to the NSA for review, according to LeRoy.

"This has been especially true in mathematics cases," LeRoy says. "There have been more instances of pre-publication review against mathematicians by the NSA than any other group."

Thus, professors who research for the NSA find that they cannot take credit for their work.

"People who work with the NSA oftentimes find they've

## INSIDE STORY

got limited credibility, and they are stuck with the same Black Budget grants over and over again," LeRoy says.

UM math Professor Gideon, who is currently on sabbatical in Seattle, says that, although the NSA is funding his research, he is "doing [his] own thing."

Volker confirmed this, saying Gideon approached the agency with a request for funding. Strangely, Volker claims Gideon has no responsibility to give any data to the NSA, and that the agency will learn of Gideon's results when he publishes them.

But according to the contract, "The government shall receive unrestricted rights to use any ideas, designs, processes or inventions resulting from or used on this contract."

Furthermore, the university must obtain written permission from the NSA to release any information about the contract, even to admit its existence.

LeRoy says this kind of non-disclosure clause "acts to pervert the generally open nature of university policies."

Cowan agrees, saying secret contracts fly in the face of academic freedom and openness.

"It's crazy," he says, "for research to be going on when you can't even find out what it's about."

Andrea Barnett is a journalist living in Taos, N.M.

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©1992 by Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, IL, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 16, No. 17) published March 25, 1992, for newsstand sales March 25-31, 1992.



## ITT's changing face

A warm breeze has begun to blow this week in our \$150,000 fund drive. We received about \$3,650 from 70 subscribers to bring our total so far to \$38,900. Procrastinators take note and send a check to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago 60647.



By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

**F**OR GOOD POLITICAL REASONS, THE DEMOCRATS have decided to make the 1992 election a referendum on the Bush administration's domestic economic policy. In the process, however, they are allowing the development of a new post-Cold War foreign policy to proceed largely unchallenged. That policy, as it has evolved within the Bush administration and the Washington policy elite, is based on a cynical and aggressive unilateralism that could eventually lead to a new Cold War—one pitting the U.S. against Japan and Germany rather than the Soviet Union.

Until this month, the new policy could only be inferred from statements made by White House National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, but it was spelled out in alarming detail in a Pentagon strategy paper, dubbed a "definitive guidance," that was leaked to the *New York Times*. The paper is meant to provide a strategic framework for the preparation of military budgets from 1994 through 1999.

**Sole superpower:** According to the Pentagon, the primary American objective should be "to prevent the emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union." To do this, the Pentagon planners recommend that the U.S. maintain its newfound role as the sole military superpower.

The Pentagon's reasoning seems circular—the U.S. should maintain its superiority by maintaining its superiority—but there is a missing term that is not clearly stated. The Pentagon planners are not primarily worried about a resurgent Russia, but rather a nuclearized Japan and Germany that could match their economic power with military power. By acting as the world's policeman, the U.S. will convince these "potential competitors" they need not aspire to a greater role or pursue a more aggressive posture to protect their legitimate interests.

In defending the Pentagon's strategy, *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer acknowledged its hidden logic. "The alternative" to American supremacy, he wrote, "is Japanese carriers patrolling the straits of Malacca and a nuclear Germany dominating Europe."

The Pentagon planners don't say why they are worried about a resurgent Germany and Japan, but their reasoning can be inferred from prior statements. Some defense officials are concerned that America's growing economic rivalry with Japan and Germany could eventually lead to military rivalry. The roots of World War I, for instance, lay partly in the struggle for markets among France, Britain and Germany.

But more important, many high officials in the Bush White House and Defense Department adhere to a cynical realism in world affairs. They believe that the struggle for power among nations is unceasing and that vacuums in power are quickly filled.

Henry Kissinger, the master of this school, explained the theory in a question and answer session during a March 12 conference in Washington sponsored by the Nixon Library. When a questioner asked him whether France's "proclivity to expand" had not been ended by its defeat at Waterloo in 1815, Kis-



Pentagon planners still reject President Franklin Roosevelt's strategy for postwar power-sharing.

## Can FDR cure the U.S. superiority complex?

singer responded that it was only curbed by the rise of a powerful neighboring state. By this reasoning, Germany and Japan's appetite for expansion was not ended by their defeat in 1945 or the subsequent reform of their political systems, but only by the presence of superior American and Soviet power.

**World's policeman:** Proponents of this cynical realism hold little hope for collective internationalism. They view the United Nations as a debating society that in optimal circumstances can be manipulated to serve American interests. Thus, while the Pentagon accepts some forms of collective action, it rejects placing American power at the behest of a larger global institution.

The Pentagon's strategy paper does not even mention the U.N. It limits its support of "collective action" to "ad hoc assemblies, often not lasting beyond the crisis being confronted." And it asserts that "the United States should be positioned to act independently when collective action cannot be orchestrated." The term "orchestrated" perfectly reveals the Pentagon's cynicism about collective action.

To maintain its position as the world's superpower, the U.S. not only has to retain and update its strategic arsenal, but also be prepared to use its conventional forces in regional policing actions. According to the Pentagon, the U.S. has to "retain pre-eminent responsibility for addressing selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our interests, but those of our allies or friends,

or which could seriously unsettle the international relations."

The U.S., not Japan, would continue to be responsible for deterring North Korea; and the U.S., not Germany, would worry about the Saddam Husseins. If the U.S. could build coalitions to accomplish these ends, fine; but if it could not, it would have to be prepared to act alone. This is a tall order—one that would certainly rule out significant reductions in the military budget well into the 21st century.

**Recipe for decline:** The Pentagon strategy has the virtue of rejecting the isolationism favored by Pat Buchanan and the woolly internationalism still popular on the left, but there is little else that can be said in its favor. Ostensibly a strategy for avoiding future war, it could in fact provoke one—by refusing

**Ostensibly a strategy for avoiding future war, the Pentagon plan could in fact provoke one by refusing Germany and Japan their rightful place in world affairs.**

Germany and Japan their rightful place in world affairs. Envisioned as a means for maintaining American superiority, it could accelerate American economic decline.

The strategy has two glaring weaknesses. First, it relies on a static and deeply pessimistic model of world history. It assumes that with the Cold War over, the world has reverted to a situation similar to that of the 19th century when Britain's navy temporarily held world war in check. It assumes that democratic reforms in Europe and Japan after World War II have not made the outbreak of military hostility among great economic powers any less likely.

Second, the strategy wrongly assumes that the U.S. can indefinitely prolong its military superiority. The Pentagon is predictably silent on American economic policy, but continuing American economic decline ensures that the country will not be able to maintain its military advantage. Either it will suffer the fate of Britain—when Germany, having acquired the ability to compete with British industry, also acquired the ability to build a formidable navy—or it will suffer the fate of the Soviet Union—collapsing under the weight of its arms budgets.

**FDR's approach:** The alternative to the Pentagon strategy was outlined by Franklin Roosevelt during World War II. Roosevelt rejected both Republican isolationism and the dreams of world government put forward by his vice president, Henry Wallace. He believed that in the short run, world order had to be based upon collective agreement among the world's great economic and military powers and that, in the long run, it had to be sustained by the growth of democracy among these powers.

Roosevelt advocated the postwar reign of what he called the "four policemen" — the U.S., Britain, China and the Soviet Union. Initially skeptical about the United Nations, he came to conceive the U.N. as an instrument for this strategy. He wanted the Security Council to be the forum where the great powers adjudicated conflicts among themselves and among lesser powers. Roosevelt saw the General Assembly as a debating society where nations could, in his words, "blow off steam." Critics on the left condemned Roosevelt's insensitivity to smaller nations, but his approach was based upon the realities of power.

Roosevelt's scheme perished with his death and the onset of the Cold War, but it still retains considerable validity as a way to approach the post-Cold War world. The U.S. cannot abandon its role in maintaining world order, but it cannot afford to play this role by itself, whether in Kuwait or on the Korean peninsula. The U.S. goal should be to bring the other great economic powers into world councils. An obvious first step would be to sponsor Japan and Germany as permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. Farther down the road, the U.S. would have to cede greater responsibility to Japan for the Kim Il Sungs and Germany for the Saddam Husseins.

The Pentagon strategy runs exactly counter to this. It would exclude Germany and Japan from global leadership. By doing this, it could create exactly the situation it hopes to avoid: an armed and adversarial Japan and Germany convinced that they have to act alone in order to secure their interests. The Pentagon's strategy is truly a plan for future war rather than peace. Once the Democrats finish debating a middle-class tax cut, they might be advised to turn their attention to it. □

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By Joel Bleifuss

## Consuming a lifetime

Earlier this month, Surgeon General Antonia Novello asked RJR Nabisco to stop pushing tobacco through its cartoon marketing agent "Old Joe" Camel. Novello and others worry that Nabisco's ubiquitous cigarette-smoking mascot was exploiting the sensibilities of innocent children, beckoning them down a path to addiction and death. According to the Coalition on Smoking or Health, Old Joe has led RJR Nabisco to capture 33 percent of the under-18 cigarette market—up from Camel's previous market share of 5 percent. In dollar terms this works out to \$476 million a year. There's big money—billions and billions—to be made selling to children. U.S. corporations are eager to exploit that market. And their "next frontier," as one ad executive put it, is America's schools.

One trailblazer into that frontier is Lifetime Learning Systems of Fairfield, Conn., which claims its school-based marketing techniques can help corporations "reach up to 63 million young people, their parents and their 2 million teachers cost-effectively." In a letter obtained by *In These Times*, Dorret Reilly, Lifetime Learning sales assistant, writes that the company can help American corporations reach budding consumers by "creating, producing and distributing corporate-sponsored educational programs to schools."

According to Reilly, the "exciting materials" produced by Lifetime Learning "stimulate product awareness and help create consumer recall." The key component of the company's exciting materials are "teaching kits" that turn school systems into marketing vehicles that help boost corporate profits.

Each of these Lifetime Learning kits contains "reproducible activity sheets designed to get students thinking about the message you want to convey," according to a company brochure. Corporate advertisement thus "becomes the focus of class discussion, the centerpiece in a dynamic process that generates long-term awareness and lasting attitudinal change."

By "transmitting your message without clutter or competition," a Lifetime Learning teaching kit "reaches into the classroom, where young people spend their time. ... Coming from school, all these materials carry an extra measure of credibility that gives your message added weight."

Roberta Nusim, the former high school English teacher who founded Lifetime Learning, told *Adweek's Marketing Week* that each year more than 46 million students from preschool to college are taught using the "corporate-sponsored curricula" her company designs and distributes.

**Synapses, crackle, pop:** The company's brochure claims teacher surveys indicate that one mailing of 10,000 Lifetime Learning "teaching kits" aimed at the preschool market will reach 600,000 tiny consumers, imprinting on them a total of 3 million ad message "impressions." Further, these 10,000 learning kits will touch the lives of 600,000 parents and 40,000 teachers. According to the brochure, "Preschool prepares children to become consumers. Research shows that children begin to make brand decisions at age four."

*Adweek's Marketing Week's* Jon Berry writes that "squeezing into a child's brain and staying there is a major challenge. Kids only retain about 200 brands at any given time. An average adult by comparison, can remember 1,500 brands."

Selina Guber, president of Children's Market Research, a New York firm, told Berry, "Kids can recognize labels and brand names even before speech sometimes." Guber says she discovered this by test-marketing. When strolling through stores with a McDonald's bag in her hand, she noticed that the packaging elicited sounds of recognition from pre-verbal toddlers.

James McNeal, professor of children's marketing at Texas A&M University, explains that before the ripe age of eight, kids are "all nerve endings." As children's brains develop, so does their susceptibility to advertising. "To many researchers, the magic figure is 100 months, or roughly eight years," writes Berry.

And as children grow older—and their allowances larger—so too does their value as a marketing target. According to Lifetime Learning, children aged five to 12 spend \$6.2 billion each year. And the nation's 13.5 million 13-to-17 year olds have "\$55 billion in annual discretionary spending" to contribute to the coffers of potential advertisers.

As the *Wall Street Journal* reported, Donnelly Marketing of Stamford, Conn., has come to the aid of physical education.

INDEPENDENT



Jack Mitchell

## John Corigliano: Composer at large

By Reece Pendleton

For a man at the peak of his profession, John Corigliano does not appear to be slowing down or resting on his laurels. With his first symphony on *Billboard's* classical best-sellers list for 41 weeks in a row, a new opera that premiered in December at New York's Metropolitan Opera, and after winning the prestigious 1991 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition, Corigliano still talks like a man on a crusade to make classical music more accessible to audiences and young composers alike.

The 53-year-old composer—whom Aaron Copland some years ago described as "one of the most talented composers on the scene today"—seems more eager to talk about the obstacles separating contemporary classical music from potential audiences than he is about his own pieces. His attacks on the music industry and the sorry state of music education in this country are intense and impassioned. One critic has referred to him as an "out-spoken zealot," not a label often associated with a classical music composer. It is precisely the image of the reclusive composer as an effete and distant artist that Corigliano is out to change. Like one of his mentors, Leonard Bernstein, he works both through his music and through existing educational venues to engage the public at large. Corigliano—who composed the score for Ken Russell's *Altered States*—wastes no time in getting to the point.

"This reclusive quality is really a carry-over from 19th-century German Romanticism that has been very destructive to composers, audiences and the whole idea of communication in music," he says. "It led to a lot of composers not writing for audiences but hoing themselves up either in universities or garrets and writing music for other composers. It is very important for composers to find a way to be useful in society and not merely satisfy their urge to write their great symphonies isolated in their castles."

Corigliano's most obvious example of this engagement with society is his *Symphony No. 1*, recorded by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Daniel Barenboim. It won him the 1992 Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition, while earning the Chicago Symphony the Grammy for Best Orchestral Performance. The symphony was written as Corigliano's response to

the AIDS epidemic that has claimed the lives of a number of his friends.

"It's a very frightening and terrible thing to realize how many of my friends I've lost," says Corigliano. "The fact is that many more of my friends have died than my mother's friends, and she's 85. We are now a generation who—in a way—has grown up as old people. I wanted people who have not been directly affected by this to be affected by it, and I thought that the concert hall would be a good forum to tell people about the feelings of loss and the anger and frustration one has about this kind of tragic loss."

Unsuspecting concertgoers, ready to snooze through another evening of Mozart, are greeted by the fierce torrents of sound in the symphony's opening movement, appropriately entitled "Apologue: Of Rage and Remembrance." Corigliano's knack for eliciting stunning waves of sound from an orchestra is in full effect here, most notably from the brass and percussion sections.

But the symphony is not all sound and fury. There are inspired moments of quiet reflection in the piece, like an elegiac interplay between two cellos during the third movement.

The AIDS Quilt was another source of inspiration for Corigliano's symphony. When it was performed in Honolulu last season, members of the NAMES Project obtained the Hawaiian section of The Quilt and hung it up around the concert hall before the concert. The effect on the audience, says Corigliano, was remarkable. "There they were at a concert primarily to hear a Mendelssohn piano concerto which opened the program, and then this thing hits them. They saw The Quilt, heard the symphony and a lot of them were deeply affected."

As Corigliano told the *Advocate*, while his symphony can transcend time by resurrecting memories and emotions, it doesn't "have the power to bring people back to life."

When asked by the *Advocate's* Robert Schwartz what impact his sexuality has on his creative process, Corigliano answered, "I don't think sexual orientation has anything to do with concert music. I know gay composers who write elegant, soft, rounded music, and I know gay composers who write dissonant, harsh music. And I don't like typecasting people, as if a 'gay sensibility' means that we have to write one kind of music or another. Being gay is part of my life, and composing is a part of my life, and sometimes—



like in my symphony—they come together. And sometimes, like in *Ghosts of Versailles*, they aren't related at all."

**Breaking traditions:** But startling concertgoers is very much a part of the plan for Corigliano, who describes himself as a theatrical composer. "The concert hall is no longer the sacred and special place that it used to be," he says. "In Beethoven's and Liszt's time, the concert hall was the only place you could hear an orchestra play. You couldn't put little earphones on or be in a supermarket or go up an elevator and hear it. Nowadays, with digital sound and superb sound systems, you find that the concert hall has become a place where people say, 'Why go there when I can sit at home and listen to it?' One of the things a composer can do to be useful is to write pieces that are made for the concert hall and that will not sound as good on a CD."

To illustrate that point, Corigliano brings up his celebrated *Clarinet Concerto*, which calls for many of the orchestra members to be positioned strategically throughout the audience. "You have clarinets way in the back of the auditorium calling to clarinets in the front, horns all around you whirling sound about, and an orchestra with timpani on either side," he says. "You can't possibly capture that on any recording, and that's good. I like that. I think that's important for a composer because it gives him the opportunity to bring back that special quality into the concert hall. It can't happen on a little screen, let alone two speakers—you have to go there to see it and really appreciate it."

Corigliano, a New York native, heard and saw a lot of music growing up. His father was concertmaster for the New York Philharmonic and his mother an accomplished pianist. Over the advice of his parents, he decided to become a composer, graduating from Columbia University in 1959 with a degree in music and going on to Manhattan School of Music. His early career was spent working at New York radio stations WQXR and WBAI and orchestrating pop music scores for CBS records. Currently, Corigliano teaches music at Lehman College at City University of New York, introducing a new generation to a new music.

Corigliano argues that classical music is dying out as an art form, particularly in the minds of younger audiences, and that it can be revitalized only by an infusion of new music into the concert halls and on recordings. "The concert hall audiences have not been nurtured enough," he says. "They haven't been given enough nourishment, so they start going to musical theater and off to pop music for their new music and experience."

"Part of the problem is that classical music has become a totally performance-oriented art form. This is tragic because the people in the music industry who are doing this are making money by promoting the act of waving a baton around or pushing a bow on a violin as *the* creative act, rather than the idea of really creating art from nothing. [Will the conductor take it] a little slower or a little faster? That's the big surprise. They've been selling this for years. That's why they've been developing new recording techniques from stereo to digital sound, because they still have to get people to record the same old pieces over and over again. It's a very sad situation."

**Young ears:** When Corigliano was appointed in 1988 as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's first composer-in-residence, he was finally in a position to challenge not only the stale programming and thinking that had become a staple at most major orchestras but he was also able to initiate a unique program that gives young composers sorely needed access to a professional orchestra.

With a sizable grant in hand, he developed a series of yearly national and local competitions for young composers. The winners of these competi-

tions have their works performed as part of the Chicago Symphony's regular subscription series or by Chicago's Civic Orchestra. Their pieces are also professionally recorded so that the composers can use them to build their musical résumés. Corigliano also went into the Chicago school system and asked a variety of children between the ages of eight and 10 to compose small melodies for him on different instruments. These melodies were notated and passed on to teenage composers to orchestrate. The resulting compositions were then performed for the children by the Chicago Symphony at a young people's concert. For Corigliano, the idea of having young people's concerts feature works written by young people was the most important aspect of the project. It changed the perception that children have about classical music.

"If you ask a kid, 'Who is a classical composer?' they will say, 'He's an old man with a white beard who's stooped over and he's been dead a long time.' Now just think what happens to their image of composers when a 14-year-old who's just written this amazing [orchestral piece] walks on stage. That's very important because it can change the attitude of how kids think of the music they've just heard. It is not only music that is performed by living people, it was written by living people who are just like them."

Similar programs are springing up at orchestras around the country, but Corigliano says that youth concerts alone are not the solution. "It's too late by then," he says. "It has to happen way back in the educational system. We have to get kids today to think that classical music is not an alien force that has invaded them from some elitist society. I don't blame them for thinking that way, though, because that's how it's been packaged."

**Raising the dead:** Corigliano's latest and perhaps most formidable creation is a grand opera buffa written for the New York Metropolitan Opera. Titled *The Ghosts of Versailles*, it opened in December to rave reviews. It is the first new opera written by a living composer that the Met has performed in over a quarter of a century. Corigliano chuckles, "They really don't know how to deal with live composers, like I said."

The massive three-hour work, set in a ghostly netherworld, tells the story of the ghost of Beaumarchais, author of *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, and his attempts to bring the ghost of Queen Marie Antoinette back to life by altering the course of history. He tries to change the outcome of the French Revolution by writing an opera in which the bumbling Figaro hatches a plot to save the queen's life. Needless to say, things go awry when Figaro refuses to follow the script during the performance for the queen, and a horrified Beaumarchais must write himself into the opera to undo the chaos that Figaro has created.

The results are both hilarious and moving and are a testament to Corigliano's skill at deftly interweaving a wide range of musical styles into a coherent whole.

But the accolades that greeted the new opera are not likely to deter Corigliano from his mission to advocate the performance of new music. He can't resist getting in a final dig. "The music industry and managements have been so busy promoting the 'masterpieces' that they forget that it's very exciting to hear a piece that you've never heard before." He pauses for a moment and then exclaims, "It's chateau wine tasting—that's what it is!" He laughs. "Classical music has become chateau wine tasting. I think we need fresh new vineyards opened up with new wine coming in."

For Corigliano, and a whole generation of young composers behind him, the planting is just beginning.

**Reece Pendleton**, a former *In These Times* intern, is a Chicago-based writer.

teachers by helping them prepare lessons on social concerns such as body odor. In conjunction with the lesson plans, the company provided the homework—deodorant product samples.

**Lifetime of crime:** And what kinds of educational messages does Lifetime Learning send out to targeted schools? "Grow-Up!" is the commanding title of a "teaching kit" on fruit and nutrition prepared for General Mills. As part of the "Grow-Up!" learning process, Lifetime Learning distributed "over 1 million samples" of General Mills Fruit Roll-Ups. Vivian Morris, a thankful teacher from Mt. Prospect, Ill., wrote the company to say, "Our children loved the Fruit Roll-Ups for snack time, and we based our curriculum this week around foods we eat and fruits we grow. Thank you!"

Like any versatile prostitute, Lifetime Learning turns tricks for a variety of clients. Northeast Utilities hired Lifetime Learning to "increase public support for nuclear power development." This effort to "re-educate consumers" was accomplished with the help of "multimedia energy education programs targeted at elementary, junior high and high school students in Northeast's service area."

Lifetime Learning reports that its teaching kit, "Energy: It's your choice," was so successful that Northeast Utilities hired the company to produce five other pro-nuclear info-tisements, including a wildly successful "adult education program on radiation."

**Friendly persuaders:** *Adweek's Marketing Week* writer Laurie Petersen provides a halfway critical look at how Lifetime Learning and other marketers "exploit American school children." Yet she praises as farsighted efforts of some corporations that invoke lofty ideals as they promote greater business involvement in the nation's education system. "These programs share a concern that if business doesn't help students today, there won't be an educated workforce tomorrow," Petersen writes. "Such enlightened self-interest generates good press and is not ruled by short-term returns on investment."

Yet is that the case? Robert Reich of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government writes in the *Washington Post*: "Ironically, instead of supporting the public schools, U.S. corporations are busily siphoning off state and local tax dollars that might otherwise prop them up. Corporations do this by demanding tax breaks and subsidies as a condition for remaining in or coming to an area. ... So don't be fooled by all the rhetoric surrounding corporations and the public schools. As corporate America finds ever more of its skilled workers overseas, it has become less—not more—concerned about whether it has a skilled workforce at home."

Reich is not the only naysayer. *Inside PR* provides this rundown: "Consumers Union has said that the majority of corporate education programs are 'brainwashing and not advertising.' ... Others question whether business ... should be encouraged to get involved in the education of the nation's youth. Is it too far-fetched to suggest that while there are things that business would like young people to learn, there are other things it would prefer them not to? The history of the labor movement in America, for example? Or economic theories that emphasize private profit motives less heavily than our own? Such criticism is infrequent however."

Or at least such critiques do not often make it into the mainstream press. There is a lot at stake. Lifetime Learning company literature explains that school hours are "prime time" for young people. Or as one marketing executive has put it, "Schools are definitely the next frontier. As long as they are open for targeting, they will and should be pushed by marketing entities. And manufacturers aren't going to be happy unless there's something in it for them."

No doubt more to their liking is advertising magnate Chris Whittle's plan to open a chain of 200 for-profit private schools by 1996. Whittle is founder of in-class television program Channel One. In this latest effort to commercialize education, Whittle has the support of the Bush administration.

According to *Congressional Quarterly*, the New American Schools Development Corp., founded by corporate citizen George Bush, has been instructed by the president to design "500 'break-the-mold' schools slated to be in operation by 1995."

In charge of breaking the mold is Roger Semerad, who, as a senior vice president at RJR Nabisco, is "Old Joe" Camel's boss. Semerad told *Education Week*, "Between the Whittle effort and [ours], I am more encouraged that some group is going to come up with very practical yet ambitious plans for designing these new learning environments."

Or, as Whittle has put it, "These won't look like schools you know."



## "Totally logical"

"Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [less developed countries]?" When World Bank Vice President Lawrence Summers posed this question in a December 12 memo, he apparently assumed only a few close colleagues at the global development agency would ever see it. But Summers' memo was leaked to the media in early February and a firestorm of protest soon followed.

Summers says his remarks were quoted out of context and were intended "as a sardonic counterpoint, an effort to sharpen analysis." But this seems unlikely. The rest of the seven-page memo is sober economic analysis with little that could be interpreted as humor. In a particularly unfunny passage, Summers says "the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that." Summers suggests that "health-impairing pollution" should occur in countries with high infant-mortality rates, since industrial carcinogens are a greater danger in countries "where people survive [long enough] to get ... cancer."

Brazilian Environment Secretary José Lutzenberger called Summers' reasoning "totally logical but perfectly insane," and called for Summers' dismissal from the bank. Although bank officials have apologized for the memo, Summers remains at his post. Nevertheless, a source within the bank who requested anonymity says Summers will stay on "a polite four or five months and then resign."

## Persecuting the prosecutors

Corporate defense attorneys went on the offensive early this month at the American Bar Association's annual conference on white-collar crime in San Francisco. According to the March 9 *Corporate Crime Reporter*, the corporate defenders portrayed themselves and their clients "as the victims of a criminal justice system out of control."

In a paper presented at the conference, attorney Milton Eisenberg argued that government prosecutors no longer distinguish "between corporations which are instruments of wrongdoing and corporations doing their best to behave as good corporate citizens." Eisenberg is a partner with Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson, a New York law firm that provided extensive legal services to "good corporate citizens" like Ivan Boesky throughout the '80s. Eisenberg complained that aggressive prosecutors have "removed much of the stigma from corporate criminal prosecutions and undermined the traditional distinctions in the law between civil and criminal liability."

Toward the end of the two-day conference, the *Corporate Crime Reporter* says a "clearly exasperated young prosecutor" defended criminal indictments of white-collar offenders. "What about the savings-and-loan crimes? What about the HUD scandal?" he asked the conferees. "Prosecutors didn't commit these crimes."

## Prosecuting the persecuted

In the May 23, 1990, edition of *In These Times*, writers Harvey and Bryna J. Fireside documented the poor treatment of Central American refugees at a Bayside, Texas, detention facility known by its inmates as *El Corralon*, "the big corral." Many of the refugees had fled the U.S.-sponsored war in El Salvador only to be deported after being held for months in the squalid Port Isabel Service Processing Center, the largest U.S. immigration prison.

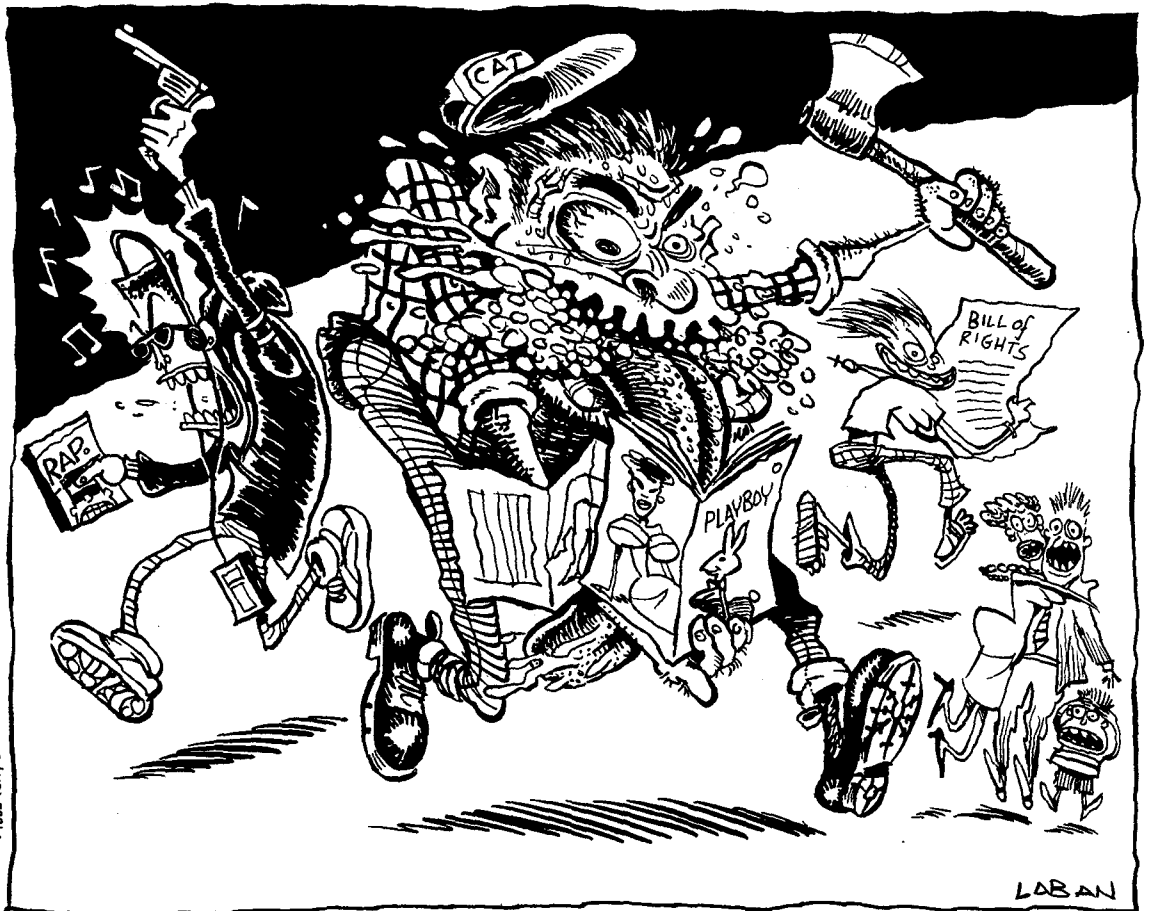
The detainees' only institutional friend, according to the 1990 article, was Proyecto Libertad, a local non-profit law firm. The article explained how the firm had convinced a federal judge that the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had been denying the refugees their rights. Proyecto Libertad is the only south Texas law office that represents indigent refugees.

Now documents obtained in a Freedom of Information Act request reveal that the FBI—with INS cooperation—began secretly investigating Proyecto Libertad in 1982. According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, "Many of the techniques described in the FBI memos are reminiscent of the intrusive spying ... that the FBI promised to cease during [the] post-Watergate reforms of the '70s."

The *National Catholic Reporter* says the FBI investigation centered on Lisa Brodyaga, an immigration attorney who founded the non-profit law office. The bureau also spied on Proyecto Libertad's employees and financial contributors, as well as a local journalist and the Texas Farm Workers Union. One of the reports' most disturbing revelations is that the INS gave the FBI information from the refugees' political-asylum applications. The INS has always contended that information in asylum applications is confidential.

—Contributed by Miles Harvey

# INSHORT



## Fighting porn, stifling free speech

A little-known anti-porn bill is scheduled for discussion this week in the Senate Judiciary Committee, and if approved there it's likely to pass on the floor with barely a whimper. The Pornography Victims' Compensation Act of 1991 (S.1521), was first introduced back in July by Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), a man fast making a place for himself at the right hand of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC).

Salted with references to hard-core porn, child porn and sexual abuse, the bill would allow the victims of sexually related crimes to sue the authors, producers and distributors of any work—from hard-core books to *Playboy* to rap records—deemed to have "caused" an offender's actions.

It bears pointing out that the Judiciary Committee co-sponsors of the bill include Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Strom Thurmond (R-SC), those noted feminists of Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill fame. And that—the views of President Reagan's Meese commission on pornography notwithstanding—there has never been any demonstrated causal link between pornography and sex crimes.

There is, however, a clear link between S.1521 and the broader pro-censorship movement of the past 10 years. Starting with the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC), which launched its drive against the barbaric hordes of rappers and metal bands nearly a decade ago, the modern censors have understood that the best way to kill expression in the marketplace is to threaten the pocketbooks of people who disseminate it.

The PMRC's organizers are for

"parental information" (i.e., warning labels), not censorship. Just ask them. Of course who can help it if certain kinds of artists—principally rap and metal musicians—are singled out for labeling? Or if several major record chains decline to carry labeled records at all? Or if record companies start forming their own in-house Hays Offices to review and revise the content of records prior to release?

Any censorial effort worth its salt starts with the kind of expression even civil libertarians have trouble defending, be it 2 Live Crew or hard-core pornographers. There used to be a vocal contingent of First Amendment absolutists to raise a flag against those tactics, but their numbers have been compromised in recent years by linguistic and feminist reactionaries who equate image and expression with overt acts of violence. The essential position of Catharine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, authors of the early-'80s porn ordinance in Minneapolis, is not that pornography incites violence, but that (like heterosexual intercourse, as per Dworkin) it is violence—a civil-rights violation, not a free-speech issue.

Would-be progressives embracing ends-over-means distinctions like these are loading a very big gun that can quite easily be taken from them and pointed at them. This applies not only to the First Amendment, but to civil liberties in general. Consider the little-noted 1990 decision, *Michigan vs. Sitz*. The suit, pushed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, concerned the legality of random drunk-driving checkpoints. The checkpoints were upheld—and, as a result, the Supreme Court ruled for the first time in American history that police

don't need probable cause based on your own suspicious behavior to stop you, detain you, search you.

Look at S.1521, and then at the current Supreme Court. A piece of legislation so baldly designed to chill expression of any kind, even hard-core porn, would have been unthinkable a few years ago—if only because the courts would have struck it down before the ink on the resolution dried. But the Rehnquist Court would not only affirm the Pornography Victims' Compensation Act; given the chance, it would extend it.

Is this paranoid reasoning? On the so-called left we have already heard feminist judicial theorists argue that porn is a civil-rights issue with no worthy connection to speech rights. Is it hard to imagine new constructions of "pornography" and "obscenity" that include any expression thought to sully decent civic discourse and unduly excite the emotions? According to Dave Marsh of the censorship watchdog *Rock & Roll Confidential*, there is currently a bill in the Washington state legislature to extend the definition of obscenity to include images of violence. Is "obscene" political speech out of the question?

It's a difference in application, not principle, to extend the spirit of S.1521 from the pornographer to the newspaper that publishes political criticism which might inspire someone to throw a rock or a punch. And it's sheer naiveté to suppose no one in power will think of that. S.1521 is a good start down the road of suppression.

—Steve Perry

(A version of this story originally appeared in *City Pages*, a Minneapolis weekly. It was distributed by *Alter-Net*.)



By Salim Muwakkil

**T**HE PERSISTENT PROBLEM OF RACIAL stereotyping by the mass media has once again emerged as a major grievance among African-American leaders and organizers. Black groups spanning the ideological spectrum are raising objections to what they contend is a growing tendency by the major media to portray African-Americans as either criminals or parasites.

This is a venerable complaint. Enslaved Africans and their progeny have always struggled to assert their humanity in a culture that had such a stake in dehumanizing them.

## RACISM

The Christianity professed by this nation's slave-holding Founding Fathers mandated human brotherhood, so black slaves had to be portrayed as less than human. Indeed, the U.S. Constitution itself regarded African descendants as two-thirds human. Negative stereotyping of African-Americans thus is as old as the country itself.

While the problem of racist stereotyping has never vanished, most analysts would agree that in the last two decades—in the wake of the civil-rights revolution—it has become less blatant. Today, media portrayals of African-Americans span a much wider range than in the days when blacks were presented exclusively in demeaning contexts. But a chorus of concern is rising from organizers in black communities across the country who argue that racist media stereotyping has reached a new high and may be just as dangerous as the inflammatory coverage that once provoked murderous night-rides by white supremacist vigilante groups.

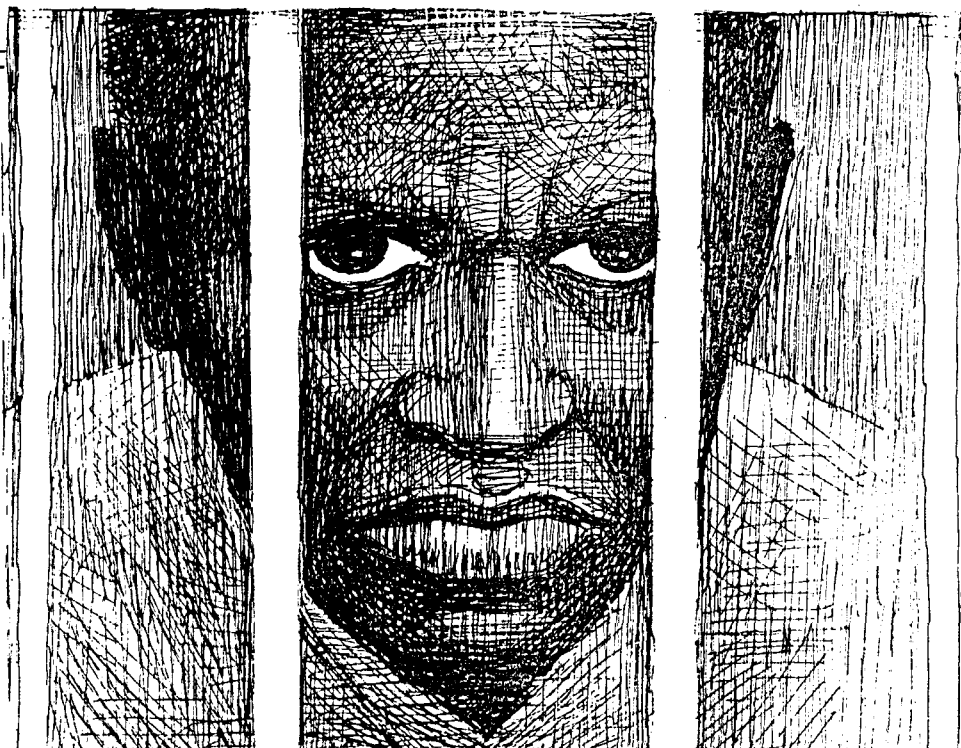
**Stereotypes in effect:** The recent spurt of concern about the issue was provoked by several widely publicized incidents that were fueled by stereotypical assumptions. For example, the Los Angeles police whose savage assault on black motorist Rodney King was surreptitiously recorded on videotape had probably categorized him as a useless drug abuser and probable criminal before mercilessly bludgeoning him. The widely broadcast videotape of the incident horrified viewers and added credibility to black youths' chronic complaints of brutal treatment by police.

But many whites, terrified by stereotyped images of crack-crazed black street gangs storming the barricades of civilization, rallied behind L.A.'s tough police chief Daryl Gates when outraged organizers demanded his ouster. Many blacks expressed dismay that the controversial Gates retained such a large degree of white support and said it demonstrated the power exerted by anti-black stereotypes.

African-Americans have expressed concern that anti-black stereotyping has had a powerful influence in other racially charged incidents across the country.

• The "wilding" black youths charged in the 1990 Central Park jogger rape and beating case were thoroughly demonized and convicted, while three of four white St. John's University students accused of gang-sodomizing a black female student—charges corroborated by eye-witness accounts—were exonerated.

• A white police officer in Teaneck, N.J., was



## Killer coverage: Black stereotypes in the media

acquitted by an all-white jury of charges he killed a black teenager in April 1990, despite scientific evidence indicating that the youth was shot while his hands were raised in a gesture of surrender.

• A white police commander in Chicago accused of systematically torturing dozens of black suspects for more than a decade, caused Amnesty International to place the city on a unique torture watch. In response to the charge, members of the city's police department held a huge rally in support of the alleged torturer.

• A female Korean merchant in Los Angeles who was videotaped last March shooting a black teenage girl to death after an altercation about shoplifting, was tried and sentenced by a sympathetic judge to five years probation and community service.

**Black men and the 5 D's:** These are incidents that have caught the attention of African-American analysts who discern the influence of negative stereotyping in them all. Some of these analysts contend that the steady diet of anti-black stereotypes is part of a renewed assault on the humanity and potential of African-Americans. "The mass media have exhibited an appalling degree of distortion, bias and insensitivity in promoting negative stereotypes and misconceptions about young black males and in failing to present a more balanced picture of poverty, crime, drug use and social dysfunction in America," writes Jewell Taylor Gibbs in the December 1991 issue of *Focus*, the house organ for the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (JCPES) in Washington, D.C.

Gibbs, a professor in the School of Social Welfare at the University of California at Berkeley and a visiting fellow at JCPES, argued that young black men are consistently described by what she called "the five D's": deviant, disturbed, delinquent, disadvantaged and dumb. "These images reinforce the long-held view of many that young black males are somehow less than human," Gibbs wrote, "providing educators, politicians and business executives with a justification to ignore their problems, dismiss their needs and blame them for a host of ills afflicting American society."

Gibbs warned that such stereotyping un-

dermines the strength of this country by aggravating deep-seated racial antagonisms that must be eased if the U.S. is to compete successfully with the industrialized nations of Europe and Asia, and be spared the social disruptions resulting from increased crime, welfare dependency and civic distress. Gibbs' argument is couched in the language of social utilitarianism, but other critics are much less circumspect in their condemnation.

**The media and "modern racism":** Boycotts of offending media are growing in popularity in several cities. In New York City, for example, both the *Daily News* and the *New York Post* have come under intense criticism and boycott pressure for what many black organizers charge is consistently negative coverage of the African-American community. "The *News* and *Post* are racist publications, pure and simple," said Elombe Brath, a New York-based black organizer and media analyst. "You can't convince dedicated racists to change simply by the power of argument. In this case, it's the power of the pocketbook that is the most effective method of persuasion."

Major publications in Detroit, Houston, Chicago, Washington, Indianapolis, Miami, New Orleans and Birmingham also have been boycotted by African-American watchdog groups in recent years. While much of this protest activity is being sparked by groups with reputations for radicalism, it is gaining increased support among more moderate constituencies. The campaign against anti-black media stereotyping is one struggle that unifies African-Americans across the political spectrum.

Broadcast media have also come under fire for perpetuating negative images of African-Americans. A recent study of Chicago's local television news shows, for example, concluded that these shows feed racial anxiety and antagonism by according dramatically different treatment to black and white criminal suspects. The study, "The Images of Blacks on Chicago's Local TV News Programs," was conducted by Northwestern University Associate Professor Robert Entman and found extensive racial bias in local television. Entman, who specializes in com-

munication and political science, charged that Chicago's television stations encourage "modern racism"—the continued, though muted, antagonism between races that centers largely on issues of crime.

"The strong resurgence of anti-black stereotypes, particularly of blacks as criminals, is part of a general conservative trend in this country," says Vernon Jarrett, a columnist and editorial board member of the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Jarrett blames much of the problem on the national leadership of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush for popularizing the notion that white Americans bore no further responsibility for racial inequality. "Naturally," Jarrett says, "if whites weren't responsible then blacks' condition must be their own fault. Increasingly, whites, even those with good intentions, began blaming the victims for their victimization, and the media simply picked up the theme."

In the 1990 book *The Mugging of Black America*, author Earl Ofari Hutchinson detailed an informal survey of several national publications that revealed how often African-Americans were linked to drug use and crime; he found that black suspects—in handcuffs, in prison, detained at gunpoint, awaiting trial in a courtroom, selling drugs on the street or as murder victims—were routinely used to illustrate the crime stories. Hutchinson compiled a list of negative terms the publications used to describe accounts of crime in the ghetto. "The warning is clear," he wrote. "Crime, violence and death lurk behind every doorway and under every archway in African-American neighborhoods. For their own health and safety, suburbanites best stay away. Crime gives the media another excuse to continue its centuries-old practice of manipulating images that promote a negative view of African-American life," Hutchinson added.

**The black press defense:** Representatives of the black press are attempting to increase readership of their publications by capitalizing on the African-American community's widespread discontent with the mainstream media. Despite some small successes, it's been a hard sell. "Today's black newspaper is not the same paper it was 30 years ago at the height of the civil-rights period," says Steve Davis, executive director of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a national organization that represents most black publications. "We've lost our cutting edge and our urgency in getting the black side of the story to African-Americans."

As the NNPA and other organizations mark the 165th anniversary of the black press—the initial issue of *Freedom's Journal*, the first black-owned newspaper, was published March 16, 1827—it's instructive to recall that the landmark publication was created explicitly to counter the blatantly anti-black stereotypes that dominated the media of that period. Riding that rationale, black-owned newspapers developed into vibrant and enormously influential forces for change within the African-American community. These days, however, most of those publications are short of both resources and passion. "The black community's anger and frustration with a mainstream media that consistently misrepresents them offers us a golden opportunity to make a strong case for the continuing need of the black press," Davis said. "Let's just hope they're listening."

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By David Moberg

CHICAGO

**N**EXT JANUARY, THE OLD BOYS' WHITE MIL-lionaire Club, otherwise known as the U.S. Senate, may have one distinctively different member. If Illinois Democratic nominee Carol Moseley Braun wins in November, she will be the first black woman senator in history. She will also be the first black Democratic senator since Reconstruction, the only contemporary black and one of only three women members of the club.

Braun's upset victory over incumbent Alan Dixon, who had not lost a political race in 42 years, was the most dramatic outcome of primary balloting that knocked Illinois congressional leadership topsy-turvy. Braun

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should be a cautious, dependable liberal, unlike conservative Dixon.

Dixon, who had become more popular among Republicans than Democrats in the state, had long been under assault for his support of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush on Central American policy and many economic issues. But it was his vote supporting Clarence Thomas' nomination to the Supreme Court that provoked a challenge, first from Braun, then from lawyer Al Hofeld, who poured \$4.3 million of his money into an ad campaign against Dixon.

**Cashing in:** Braun spent only \$375,000 and had a hard time raising that. Several women's political action groups helped early, including a maximum donation and endorsement from the National Organization for Women as soon as Braun announced. But Emily's List, which emphasizes early money for women candidates, did not send Braun money until very late, having judged the campaign too disorganized to succeed, as many pros did.

But anti-Dixon sentiment turned into pro-Braun feelings as a grass-roots effort spread despite the chaotic campaign. Bit by bit the elements of victory came together. Hofeld tapped a distinct anti-Dixon lode that Braun may not have been able to mobilize. Braun put in a credible performance in the one televised debate, but had only a few TV ads late in the campaign. Many blacks who had not even realized she was black early on swung to her support at the end.

Braun also benefited from her two opponents largely deciding not to attack her while they chopped up each other. Braun emerged as a positive alternative, who talked about education and health care but was not strongly identified with any issues. She rarely attacked Dixon's vote on Thomas, partly since that could have lost her some black votes, but voters—especially women—outraged by the nomination and the Anita Hill sexual harassment hearings clearly were attracted to her.

To his credit, Dixon strongly endorsed Braun in his concession speech. That should help head off the serious potential problem of defections from a black candidate. Braun, a 45-year-old lawyer and former state legislator, is an attractive, non-threatening candidate, who is not likely to encounter as much racial backlash as did the late Chicago Mayor Harold Washington when he won a three-way primary in 1983. Republicans had slated a reluctant neophyte, rich and very conservative Kenilworth lawyer Rich Williamson, with the expectation that Dixon would be hard to beat. Now they are certain to see an opening.

Braun won with 38 percent of the votes;



Carol Moseley Braun upset incumbent Sen. Al Dixon in the Illinois primary.

## Senate may get a fresh new face

Dixon had 35 percent, Hofeld 28 percent. Braun drew heavy support from Chicago blacks and affluent white liberals (exit polls showed that 48 percent of liberals voted for her, but she lost among moderates and conservatives). She ran strongly with women, winning very heavily among those who opposed the Thomas nomination. Although she did poorly among Republican crossovers, she beat Dixon 40 percent to 30 percent in exit polls among independents and won by surprisingly large margins in the white, heavily Republican suburban counties surround-

ing Chicago.

**More than a House cleaning:** The turmoil in House races did not follow any standard pattern. There is a diffuse anti-incumbent strain, but distinct factors in each race were more important than general "throw-the-bums-out" sentiment.

• Conservative Democrat Bill Lipinski handily defeated Marty Russo, a leading proponent in the House of a Canadian-style national health-care plan, largely because of a strong, nasty Democratic machine campaign on behalf of party committeeman Lipinski. Re-

districting pitted the two incumbents against each other. With a Republican registration edge in the district, Lipinski may have a tough race in the fall.

• In his third try, Democrat Mel Reynolds ousted flamboyant race-baiter Gus Savage in one of three largely black Chicago districts. White voters in the redrawn district, including organized Republican crossovers, tipped the balance against Savage, but there was solid black discontent with his style as well.

• In another largely black district, former Black Panther leader Bobby Rush, now a Chicago alderman who has made his peace with the Democratic Party enough to be state vice-chair, defeated the incumbent congressman and former labor leader Charles Hayes. Rush added to his own black base some newly redistricted white voters, attracted by his environmental pledges, and benefited from votes that went from a third candidate who remained on the ballot after she had dropped out to back Hayes. But the revelations just before the election that Hayes, who did not campaign hard, had written 716 overdrafts on the House bank probably sealed his fate.

• Democratic House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, who has almost never had a serious challenge, turned back a surprisingly strong campaign by liberal former alderman and college professor Dick Simpson by a 57 to 43 percent margin. Simpson's showing, despite meager funds and Rostenkowski's name and clout, indicates a deep discontent with Rosty's conservatism and special-interest politics even among voters not expected to back a reformer.

• In a state representative race that drew national attention over reproductive rights, pro-choice candidate Rosemary Mulligan defeated prominent pro-life advocate Penny Pullen in the northwest suburbs. It was a rematch of a race that Mulligan narrowly lost two years ago after a lengthy vote count dispute. □

## Clinton's economic plan gets votes, but will it work?

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

**W**ITH THE ELIMINATION OF PAUL TSON-gas following his Illinois and Michigan primary defeats, the race for the Democratic presidential nomination turned into Bill Clinton's triumphal march to the New York convention. Yet the Arkansas governor's well-regimented political army still faces the highly unpredictable, potentially damaging guerrilla assaults of a newly invigorated Jerry Brown.

Brown has virtually no chance of winning, even if new controversies engulf Clinton, but he can become the lightning rod of discontented energies within the Democratic Party. In Michigan in particular, he began to add angry workers and union members to his small base among environmentalists, well-educated liberals and the politically disgruntled. He may still fashion a pale rainbow coalition—minus most blacks.

Despite Tsongas' rhetoric about rebuilding manufacturing, he failed miserably in Illinois and Michigan to reach the blue-collar or African-American voters with his pro-business message of austerity. The former Massachusetts senator proved himself unable to expand on his base of upper-income social liberals who are economically conservative.

Clinton's victory ultimately was due in

large part to the power of money, organization and the sophisticated creation of political imagery. Tsongas, like most of Clinton's opponents, fought on the same turf and lost. Without major campaign contributions, he could not go on. The one contender left standing has—perhaps even more than Jesse Jackson did in 1984 and 1988—sustained himself through a completely antithetical, anti-money insurgent campaign.

Some portion of Tsongas' well-educated,

## POLITICS

environmentalist backers may find Brown attractive. Likewise those who leaned to Tsongas because they disliked or distrusted Clinton may find Brown a vehicle of protest.

Clinton should easily capture most conservative Tsongas backers. (But the big question will be how many of those swing voters and independents will stick with Clinton in the fall.) Brown is thus forced to try to tear away from Clinton many of the blacks, low-income voters and union members who had already gravitated to Clinton when there were several liberal alternatives in the race.

Clinton can now return to the position he always assumed he would have—fighting against a candidate of the party's liberal wing. But it will be hard to characterize Brown as a traditional Democratic liberal.

In his own fashion, Brown attacks Democratic liberalism as much as Clinton does. However, Brown's flat tax plan—a giveaway to the rich at odds with the rest of his economics—will offer Clinton an opportunity to attack Brown from the left while remaining comfortably positioned to his right.

The three final contenders all positioned themselves as candidates running against the Democratic Party establishment. All three adamantly insisted that they wanted to redefine the party. With the further embrace of Clinton by the party establishment, Brown will now have the clearest outsider credentials, but it may offer him only a slight boost. In any case, Brown may force a heated debate on trade policy, support for labor and corporate power. To the dismay of many Democrats, he also seems likely to adopt a scorched-earth assault on Clinton's character. The result could be a much livelier, much different economic debate, as well as a potentially ugly slugfest on personal matters.

**Political postures:** Billed as a clash of economic plans, the Illinois and Michigan primaries were more a test of political positioning. All three candidates rejected pure laissez-faire economics in favor of a stronger government role. All three stressed economic growth and overall national strategy more than redistribution, although Clinton played with the politics of fairness with his middle-



class tax cut and Brown talked of a redistribution of power.

Despite Clinton's acknowledgement that there were few differences between his and Tsongas' tax incentives to business, the front-runner managed to portray Tsongas as a politician who would continue to "pound lower-class and middle-class people into the dirt." Although Clinton favors limiting growth of "consumption" spending, which would include most "entitlement" programs, he was able—somewhat unfairly—to identify Tsongas as the Social Security Scrooge.

With his pumped-up economic populism and attack on free trade with Mexico, Brown tapped strains of discontent with the two leading candidates as well as anger over economic decline. Doubts about the man—both who he is and his viability as a candidate—overshadow his message for many voters. But his surge in the polls, despite all his handicaps and a church-mouse poor campaign, is testimony to a deep-seated discontent that cool Clinton does not reach.

Clinton demonstrated an ability to draw urban black support, in part because he, more than the others, seems culturally more at home with blacks. This was evident in his Sunday morning swing through black churches in Chicago, where he sang along with the hymns and preached a political gospel comfortable to the black mainstream. But he also won heavily outside of Chicago, especially in southern Illinois.

Clinton's campaign has followed the thinking of those Democratic strategists who emphasize the need to recapture the so-called Reagan Democrats, socially conservative blue-collar and middle-income white ethnics. Clinton won on Chicago's Northwest and Southwest Sides and in adjacent suburbs with many of these conservative Democratic voters. But Tsongas was a close second in many of these areas, and did better than his average among white Catholics and those who think blacks have too much power. Among voters of Eastern European origin he beat Clinton.

This showing probably reflects these voters' misgivings about Clinton's character, an issue the Republicans are sure to exploit if he's nominated. Watching the candidates along the South Side St. Patrick's Day parade route, Bill Byrne, 63, a retired factory worker was leaning to Tsongas despite favorable impressions of Clinton. "There was a lot of fanfare about his, shall we say, extracurricular activities," he said. His wife, Patricia, was more blunt in explaining her support of Tsongas: "He's got good morals." Liz, a 23-year-old white-collar worker, preferred Tsongas "because he's honest and he's not a womanizer." But county worker Michael O'Grady, 60, backed Clinton: "I like the way he stood up when they were coming at him with that bad publicity, and his family stood up with him."

**Economic cheesecake:** Judged in the light of what they would do for the economy rather than in what they do in the polls, the economic prescriptions of Clinton, Brown and the now-retired Tsongas share two things: Each is superior to Bush's non-plans; each is woefully inadequate.

With an unwanted subtext on his character controversies, Clinton saw America's economic future in cheesecake. In a visit to Eli's Chicago's Finest Cheese Cake, Clinton touted the small factory's support of continuing education of its workers. "The single most important thing we can do to raise income and improve jobs is to teach everyone to read and for everyone to get their GED,"

or high school equivalence diploma, a white-coated Clinton told reporters after a photo turn baking cheesecake.

Eli's started eight years ago with seven workers. Its employees now total 107. Thirteen of them—Eastern European immigrants and minority high school dropouts—take classes with a local junior college instructor on their own time but in a factory room. Management provides texts and some cash for good attendance.

The program is clearly a success, even if there's little prospect that exporting cheesecake to Japan will reduce the nation's auto trade deficit. On that major issue for Michigan, Illinois, and the country, Clinton had virtually nothing to say, except to decry GM's "betrayal" in closing the Flint engine factory where workers had cooperated with GM management.

With his hair and beard covered in gauzy netting, Jerry Benson, a black high school dropout, said that after taking "Eli's University" classes he went from feeling negative and depressed to feeling joy and a new self-respect. "I got motivated in every aspect of life," he said, even to buy a new house.

Managers say workers in training show a new self-confidence and pay more attention to quality. They communicate better and make calculations, such as batch changes, more easily. "They're not afraid to bring things up," plant manager Brian Smith said. "They're more interested in the job and their surroundings."

**No magic bullet:** But such training is, despite Clinton's enthusiasm, no magic bullet. Most of the jobs at Eli's still pay \$5.50 to \$7 an hour, according to workers, hardly "high wage" except, perhaps, by Arkansas standards. While the in-house education provides clear benefits to Eli's and its newly trained workers, there are also serious limits to such training. Yale University economists Stephen Cameron and James Hickman found in a 1991 study that people who earned a GED had no more hours of work, no higher earnings or no fewer bouts of unemployment than high school dropouts. The GED may be a needed entry ticket to further schooling but in itself offers little reward.

If a President Clinton put his money where his platform is, there is much merit in his education proposals—from stronger Head-

## In Illinois, Clinton chose a non-union factory for a key campaign appearance.

start to apprenticeship programs, worker retraining and college aid. Yet Clinton, who promoted education reforms in Arkansas with as yet modest effect on economic or educational statistics, pursues education as an economic holy grail. Clinton's politically non-controversial focus on education helps position him as the "trickle-up," "people-based" candidate in contrast with Tsongas, the "trickle-down" heir to Reaganomics.

Yet education alone won't redress America's long-run economic travail. "We cannot get substantial improvement in the economy without a well-educated workforce," said Edith Rasell, an economist at the liberal Economic Policy Institute (EPI). "It's a prerequisite, but it's inadequate in itself."

Clinton also chose a non-union factory to make his point while campaigning in two of

the most unionized states in the country. Declaring himself "pro-worker, not anti-union," Clinton said workers should choose whether they want a union but stressed that most workers are not in unions. Yet if Clinton wanted to push workplace innovation and competitiveness, the evidence shows he should support unions, rather than run away from organized labor. Unions have long been the leading proponents for more worker education and retraining.

Contrary to the image Clinton perpetuates, unions are a major force for precisely the high-productivity, high-skill, high-wage jobs he says he wants to create. For example, labor-relations experts Adrienne Eaton and Paula Voos, in a collection of studies entitled "Unions and Economic Competitiveness" published by the EPI, showed that "the use of the most truly productivity-enhancing innovations [in the workplace] is...more common in the union sector than the non-union sector" of the economy. In the same volume, economists Maryellen Kelley and Bennett Harrison question the effectiveness of many employee involvement schemes. More striking, they found that among comparable factories, union workplaces are more efficient than non-union, and that, to the extent employee participation works, unions increase its effectiveness.

Shunning unions, as Clinton has done, is a tempting but questionable political strategy for a Democrat. Illinois voter exit polls showed 39 percent of Democrats thought unions had too much power and only 30 percent thought unions were too weak (Tsongas did best among the anti-union workers, but Clinton still won 49 percent to 30 percent; among the pro-union workers Clinton beat Tsongas 59 percent to 21 percent). Yet ignoring unions is certainly wrong-headed economic and social policy.

What would make a difference for a small, growing company like Eli's? Lower interest rates and lower health-care costs, said Eli's President Marc Schulman. Paying 7.5 percent of payroll for health care under the single-payer bill in Congress instead of his current 10 percent (plus worker's co-payment) "would certainly be advantageous," said Schulman. Yet Clinton's health plan will not limit health-care costs as dramatically as the Canadian-style plan he rejects.

What about a capital gains tax reduction—which under Clinton's plan would apply to Eli's? "That isn't significant to us," Schulman said. "That's only in effect if you sell the business. We'd be more interested in investment tax credits. But the largest part is general economic conditions and what we're doing in terms of innovation."

**Taxing problems:** Tsongas brought to heavily industrialized Michigan and Illinois his call for an "economic battle plan" and concentration on manufacturing. But he was more successful with liberal lawyers than with factory workers. His diatribes against Clinton's middle-class tax cuts and upper-income tax hikes as "Twinkie economics" were right: They would do little to stimulate the economy, even if they made the tax code slightly more progressive. But excepting his little-mentioned ideas about supporting research and innovation, Tsongas fired all his "bullets" at one target: capital gains tax cuts for holding securities long-term.

Clinton, who has his own slightly narrower capital gains tax cut proposal for so-called start-up businesses, rightly argued that there is no longer much connection between what happens in the stock market and levels of investment. He was also right in arguing that



the capital gains tax cuts in the '80s did nothing to stem manufacturing decline. Yet much the same critique could be turned on his tax-break strategy for business.

Tsongas promoted familiar Draconian economics: hold down consumption while increasing savings. Unlike Bush, he at least wanted to channel investment to manufacturing. But for working-class voters who had suffered through more than a decade of stagnant and declining incomes, the idea of giving up even more to the rich in hopes that they would provide jobs held no appeal.

And within Tsongas' own little gray book, *A Call to Economic Arms*, there was a clue about the failings of his plan. Tsongas cited statistics from 1970, 1980 and 1988 comparing both public and private investment in the U.S., Germany and Japan. They showed consistently lower and declining private investment in the U.S. They also showed a strong correlation between the level of public investment (much higher in Germany than in the U.S. and higher still in Japan) and the rate of private investment.

Yet this registered with neither Tsongas nor Clinton. Clinton at least acknowledged that public investment ought to be counted as a separate item in the budget, but he dismissed the idea of a massive public works program as prohibited by the deficit.

**Engine of economic growth:** At the Top Flight restaurant on the Chicago's South Side, not far from Midway Airport, Tsongas talked about creating jobs and stimulating the economy. Questioned by one diner about trade with Japan, Tsongas said, "They take advantage of us, but we're most of the problem. We need to build better products to compete." To the extent that "we" are the problem, one thing that government can easily do is boost public investment.

Tsongas legitimately asked voters to focus on the "engine" of economic growth. But the public sector can be an engine alongside private business, in addition to providing tracks for the private business engine (the infrastructure), critical raw material (an educated workforce), markets and ideas for products, and much more. In the broad scheme, tax policy is one small and imprecise tool.

Don Feeley, president of the United Business Association of Midway, liked Tsongas'

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# Democrats

Continued from preceding page

ideas about rebuilding industry and providing more incentives to business. His members had been investing in the area in recent years. A new rapid transit line from the Loop to the airport should open this year, and local businesses were expecting a boom. Then Midway Airlines, a product and then a victim of airline deregulation, went bankrupt. Worse yet, Mayor Richard Daley's controversial plan for a new southeast Chicago airport will kill Midway. Wouldn't public investment in Midway Airport help local businesses far more than a capital gains tax cut? "Right here, you're correct," Feeley agreed.

What Tsongas and Clinton both forgot in their race away from Democratic orthodoxy is that businesses invest when they have a chance to sell goods and make profits. Public investment creates markets—especially for

domestic labor and products—stimulates the economy and can even provide strategic direction, much as U.S. military-industrial policy did for the aerospace industry. Public investment also creates private wealth and investment by increasing the overall efficiency of the economy.

**Off the fast track:** Arriving for a campaign stop in his white turtleneck, plaid shirt, complimentary United Auto Workers windbreaker ("Be American, Buy American"), Jerry Brown quickly was briefed on the empty hulk of a factory behind him. Once the employer of as many as 7,000 workers making auto parts and other equipment, the Stewart-Warner plant on Chicago's North Side suffered many years of management neglect.

BTR, a British conglomerate, took over in 1989 and began stripping the plant and rejecting all worker initiatives to save jobs. It shut down the factory last June as BTR transferred the last 1,000 jobs to a Mexican border

plant. Now hundreds of long-term, often skilled workers are unemployed despite participating in job training, trade adjustment and GED programs. "Even though we get them trained, the economy is in such shambles, people can't get jobs," lamented James Schultz, who works with the local union's transition efforts.

As Brown stepped to the microphone, a truck stopped across the street. "I'm an out of work carpenter," the driver shouted, "and you've got my vote." A perpetually angry, intense Brown assailed the rip-off of "good hard-working Americans who have been lied to and had their jobs taken to Mexico where people are paid a fraction of their wages." He warned of growing inequality and social polarization. If we could mobilize for war, he said, "we can take the same energy and commitment to make factories competitive, and where we can't, to protect these jobs."

How would he do it? First, stop "fast track," which Brown uses as shorthand for a free

trade agreement with Mexico (although he favors some more equitable common North American market). Then develop a new Civilian Conservation Corps for public works, undertake massive energy efficiency conversion (which could pay for itself out of the estimated \$300 billion in energy wasted every year), and rebuild the infrastructure, including new ports and high-speed trains. Develop a 100-mile-per-gallon car that "the Japanese will stand in line to buy."

"I favor anything that will protect American jobs," he shouted. "We need to expand trade, but we can't do it on the backs of people who can't give \$1,000 contributions to politicians."

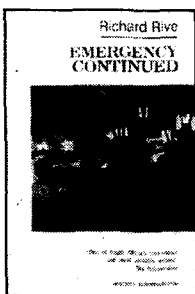
Yet despite expressing the intention to do something, it's not clear how any of his proposals would have saved Stewart-Warner (which went to Mexico before any "fast track" or treaty). But neither Tsongas nor Clinton would be likely even to show up at

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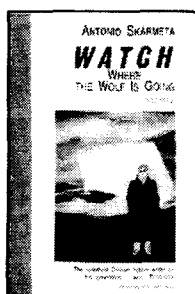
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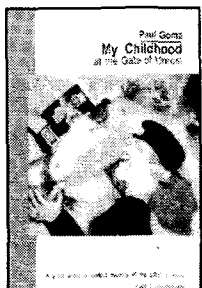
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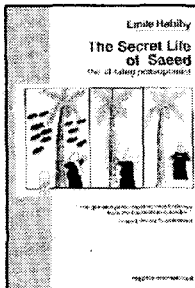
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By Craig Charney

JOHANNESBURG

**W**HEN JOHANNESBURG PSYCHOLOGIST Cora Liebowitz returned from the polling place during the whites-only referendum on constitutional reform in South Africa, her black gardener asked, "Did you vote 'yes'?" When she said she had, he beamed and replied, "Next time, we'll all be voting."

The encounter summed up the meaning of the decisive March 17 vote. The final result was a 69 percent to 31 percent landslide favoring a continuation of the talks on a one-person, one-vote constitution between President F.W. de Klerk's National Party (NP), Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) and other political parties. But the process was just as important: a seesaw campaign that made a nervous ruling minority confront its fears and publicly support sharing power with the black five-sixths of the population.

Despite the wide margin in the end, a "yes" result was no certainty when the referendum was called February 20. Growing discontent among whites reflected the economic and social problems confronting more advanced Third World countries—from which apartheid had shielded them—as well as the racial fears generated by South Africa's transition to democracy.

Inflation is more than 15 percent, pushing whites into higher tax brackets every year. Black unemployment tops 40 percent, and crime is soaring as a result. White Johannesburg's murder rate is twice that of New York. Burglaries are so rife that most whites have had more than one break-in or know someone who has.

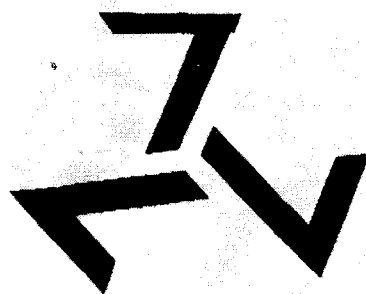
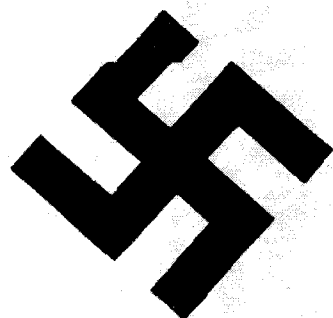
**White fright:** Shantytowns are mushrooming on the outskirts of cities now that controls on black urbanization are gone, leaving white homeowners fearful for their property values and safety. The mild-mannered liberal residents near one squatter camp north of Johannesburg called in Rambo from the neo-fascist Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB from its Afrikaans initials) for protection. When plans were made to move the camp, whites near the proposed site erected barricades and threatened a tax strike. These developments suggested that government risked losing more than support: It was losing control of the country.

Shaun Johnson, political editor of the *Johannesburg Star*, wrote in mid-February, "The whites I see, be they industrialists, professionals, or struggling blue-collar workers, are sullen and angry about current and future change. You need not scratch the surface too vigorously to discover they would just as soon rewind the tape of history." Their pessimism was underlined by a Human Sciences Research Council survey which found that only 15 percent of whites thought life would be better in the "new South Africa" de Klerk was negotiating.

Tensions were worsened by the fact that all de Klerk's major initiatives since 1990—unbanning the ANC, repealing the segregation laws which formed the pillars of apartheid and starting the constitutional talks at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA)—were U-turns from the policies on which he was elected by whites in 1989.

The crisis came to a head at the February

**This one cost  
45 million lives  
and took  
6 years of war  
to stop.**



**How many lives  
will this one cost?  
Your  
vote will decide.**

Vote "Yes" for a negotiated peace.  
17 March.



The above advertisement ran in newspapers throughout South Africa. It depicts the swastika-like symbol of the country's neo-fascist Afrikaner Resistance Movement.

## South African vote brings country back from brink

19 by-election in Potchefstroom, 65 miles west of Johannesburg, which de Klerk had billed as a test of support for his policies. The NP lost it on an 11 percent swing to the pro-apartheid Conservative Party (CP).

The pro-government Johannesburg daily *Beeld* warned, "President de Klerk can no longer be assured of a majority if a referendum on a new constitution is held among whites." Rather than call such a poll at the end of the CODESA talks, as planned, and risk losing more support, de Klerk announced the March 17 vote to get a clear mandate to negotiate. If he lost, he said, he would resign and call an election where the CP could come to power.

The "yes" camp began the campaign supremely confident. They had the support of the NP and the liberal opposition who together had won 68 percent of the 1989 vote. De Klerk began a highly publicized, U.S.-style whistlestop tour. Big business gave millions for publicity, and the major Afrikaans and English press groups were also supportive. (The more conservative Afrikaners, descended from Dutch settlers, form three-fifths of the whites; somewhat more liberal British descendants make up two-fifths.) The ANC, while opposed to a white poll, also called for a "yes."

But de Klerk soon discovered he had a fight on his hands. The "no" alliance—formed by the CP, the AWB, and a small far-right party—tirelessly held rallies, put up posters and canvassed house-to-house. They played on themes the NP had used for decades past: the defense of white living standards, hostility toward blacks and fears that majority rule equals Communism. (The ANC is allied to the small South African Communist Party though ANC policy is social democratic.)

"The doubts linger, the distrust festers and the CP make the most of it," wrote veteran political columnist Ken Owen of Johannesburg's *Sunday Times*. His paper found that many Afrikaners were wavering, while English-speakers were apathetic and threatened to stay away from the polls.

One week before the vote the CP said it was a dead heat, and the *Star* reported signs of panic in the "yes" camp. They replied with hard hitting speeches, ads and posters which left no doubt about what would happen if the Conservatives won: civil war, international isolation, sanctions and a government where the fascist AWB was prominent. (There was a certain irony to the NP running an anti-fascist campaign, since some prominent Nationalists were de-

tained during World War II for pro-Nazi activity.)

**The home front:** But the most important front in the campaign was the living rooms, offices and shops where whites discussed the issues non-stop. People who normally ignore politics looked beyond their immediate discontents and fears, peered into the abyss and recoiled from what they saw. Political observers agree that the result was a sort of national catharsis, firming up the "yes" vote in the final days. (Editorialists and graffiti artists gave a new twist to the black exclusivist Pan Africanist Congress' grim slogan, "One settler, one bullet," to urge whites to vote: "One settler, one ballot!")

Polling day saw huge lines of voters, with the national turnout an astonishing 85 percent. In Yeoville, Johannesburg, the line was 70 yards long at 10:30 a.m., normally a quiet time during elections. In the neighborhood—a cross between New York's Greenwich Village and Upper West Side, with a

### APARTHEID

mix of students, middle-class Jews and some blacks—there were many first-time voters. (One of them, Communist leader Jeremy Cronin, voted "yes" early, then departed furtively saying, "If I stay, it might harm your cause.")

The determination to vote, especially among elderly voters, was striking: one woman with a cane, in visible pain with every step, marched on, saying, "We've got to keep those Nazis out."

With the overwhelming "yes" vote (1.9 million out of 2.7 million cast) in all four provinces, the stage is set for a speed-up of the negotiating process. Both ANC sources and the pro-NP *Beeld* report that an interim cabinet composed of the parties at CODESA is likely to be appointed soon, perhaps as early as June, establishing joint control of finance, defense, the broadcast media and elections. A one-person, one-vote election will follow, perhaps before year-end, for an interim legislature charged with drafting a new constitution.

**Saving face:** The NP's position in those elections has probably been improved by de Klerk's brave stance, which undid some of the damage from the Inkathagate scandal last year, when his government was revealed to have funded a black party opposed to the ANC. There were many blacks in the crowds he drew, strengthening the NP's chances of running a strong second to the ANC.

Meanwhile, defeat has strained the right-wing alliance. It is likely to split between those now ready to enter CODESA and the few committed to armed resistance.

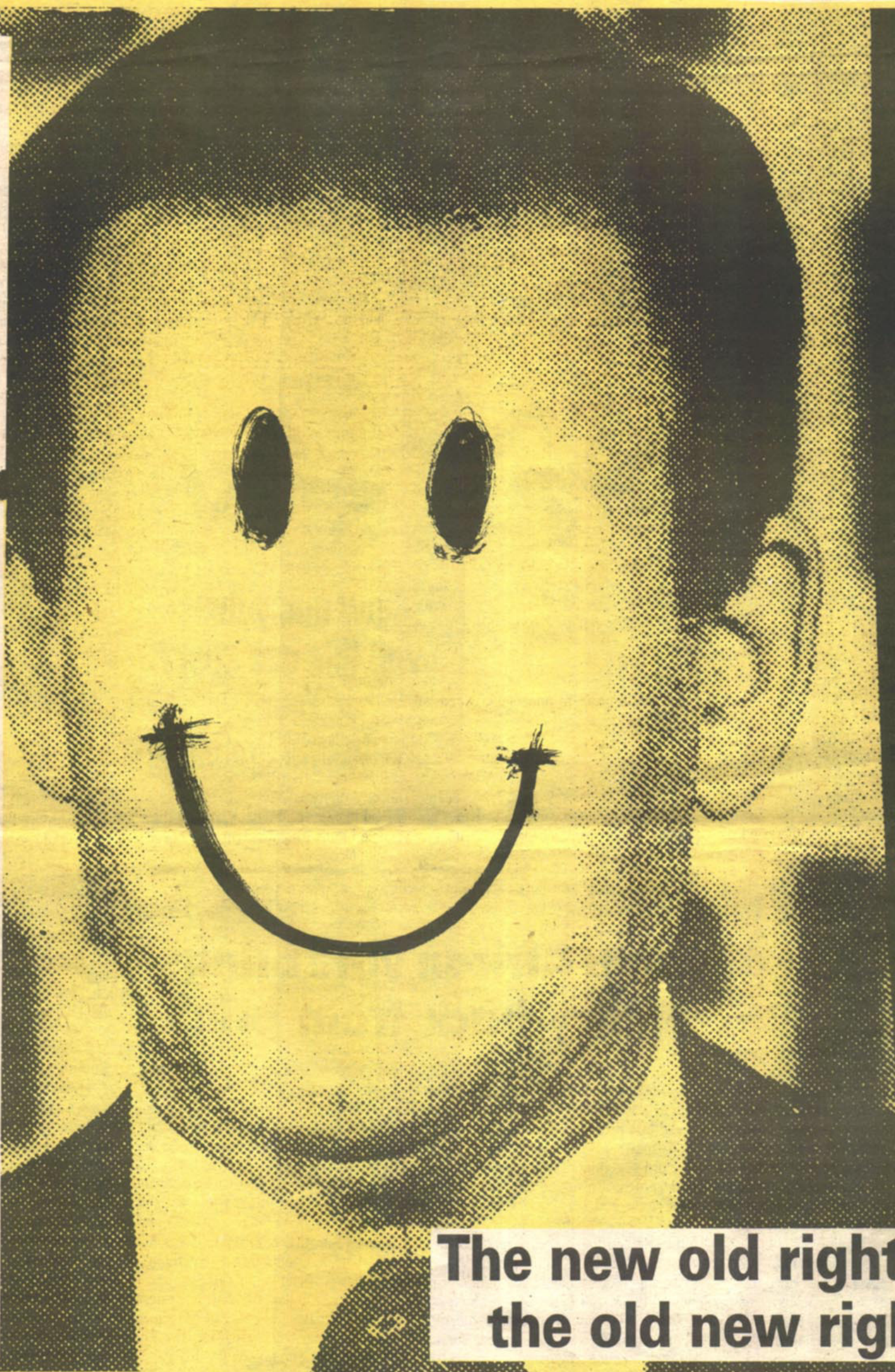
Of course, political opposition has not ended: In fact, ANC marchers were in the streets protesting the new austerity budget as the referendum results came out. But the most important outcome of all is that through the referendum, as de Klerk said in his victory speech, "The white electorate has reached out to all other South Africans. This is the real birthday of the new South African nation." Though he is known for his coolness under pressure, when he said that there were tears in his eyes—and in many others around the country. □

**Craig Charney** is a Social Science Research Council Fellow from Yale now doing research in the Sociology Department of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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# Buchanan's battle



## The new old right vs. the old new right

By Daniel Lazare

**W**HEN PAT BUCHANAN BEGAN SHOWING sympathy for New Hampshire residents who had fallen on hard times and had lost their homes, no one seemed more surprised than the press.

Plying the campaign trail for the *New York Times*, Steven Holmes called it "a startling transformation," adding that while "the fire-breathing, hard-edged economic and social

Darwinism that made Mr. Buchanan famous" had not vanished completely, it "has been tempered." Chris Black of the *Boston Globe* said the new Buchanan stood for "a more compassionate conservatism that would consider human needs," while Sidney Blumenthal in *The New Republic* said Buchanan sounded like nothing less than "Hubert Humphrey at full bleeding-heart throttle."

"His program," Blumenthal continued, "contained aspects of social welfare that were to the left of not only Bush but Paul

Tsongas. Bush had never before encountered a threat from the right that maneuvered on the left."

**A right-wing Alan Alda?** What's it all about? Has Buchanan really gone soft? Has the White House pit bull who once talked (metaphorically, of course) of "firing from the upper floors" on the Iran-contra committee turned into just another sensitive guy given to Donahue-esque emanations over the plight of the downtrodden and oppressed?

Not quite. Pat, for better or worse, is still Pat. What is different, though, is that the politician whom William Safire calls an "anti-intellectual intellectual" has been on a mission lately, an ideological quest of sorts, scouting out new territory on the radical right. It's not a terrain that policy wonks and spin-meisters in Washington are terribly familiar with, which explains their surprise at what he's brought back.

And indeed, the new right (more properly, the new *old* right) is radically different from



the neoconservatism that dominated the Reagan White House. The old new right—led by William Bennett, Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter and Elliott Abrams—was corporate, internationalist and largely secularist. Many of the top figures (most notably Kristol) were lapsed Marxists who still believed in the capacity of human beings to remake the world in their own image. The new old right, by contrast, is often religious, always nationalist, hostile to big cities and big business, culturally traditionalist and profoundly suspicious of any notion of social engineering.

Unlike neocons, who regard themselves as proselytizers for democracy (provided said democracy does nothing to challenge corporate prerogatives), paleoconservatives regard "democratism" as a species of totalitarianism hardly less intrusive than Stalinism or fascism. Rather than championing majority rule, they want to restrict it by limiting areas of human activity subject to government purview. In wanting government out of the lives of individuals, they are no less hostile to government by majority than to autocracy.

**Kinder, gentler nationalists:** The paleoconservatives also have a different take on the compassion issue. Liberals, we all know, like compassion. Neoconservatives, we're equally aware, don't, believing that compassion is a condition imposed by sob sister social workers that prevents unemployed workers, among others, from adjusting to the fast-changing demands of the global economy. Instead of sympathy, they think the jobless need a kick in the pants to encourage them to learn skills.

Paleoconservatives, on the other hand, disagree with both. Unlike neocons, they believe in compassion (as Buchanan asserted over and over again in New Hampshire), but in the context of a nationalist ideological framework, as opposed to a liberal-humanitarian one. If their hearts bleed for hard-pressed New Hampshire residents tossed out of their homes, it's not because they're human beings but because they're Americans and are therefore entitled to a helping hand. All others—starving Ethiopians, typhoon-stricken Bangladeshis, European Jews on the run from Hitler, etc.—must go to the end of the line.

It's solidarity of a sort, "national solidarity," as paleocon columnist Samuel Francis puts it. In a sense, it represents the elevation of people over profits, provided the people in question are U.S. citizens and the profits are those accruing to the international banks and other supranational corporations. It's a world view that takes special umbrage, as Buchanan put it in New Hampshire, at an administration that agrees to forgive portions of Egypt's, Poland's or the ex-Soviet Union's foreign debt, yet sticks it to middle-class Americans (the operative word here) who have fallen behind on their mortgage. To the paleocons, it's a case of *our* government treating *them* better than it treats *us*.

"America First" implies other possibilities as well, although Buchanan has so far not acknowledged them in public. Where national solidarity and a hawkish trade policy go, for instance, can industrial planning or coordination, heretofore the province of liberals and the left, be far behind? Can social welfare be far behind, as well, provided it is designed to make rank-and-file U.S. citizens feel they're part of one big pugnacious family?

While obviously opposed to anything

The media has been making much of the new "compassionate" Pat Buchanan. Has the old Pat really gone soft? Not quite. It's just that he's been on an ideological quest of sorts, scouting out new territory for the radical right.

smacking of international working-class solidarity, paleoconservatism might try to coopt organized labor on a populist-protectionist basis, rather than simply drive it six feet under the way neocons do. After all, Father Coughlin—the right-wing radio priest of the '30s, whom Pat Buchanan increasingly resembles—started off as an enthusiastic New Dealer and labor supporter, albeit of tame company unions, before emerging toward the tail end of the decade as a full-blown Nazi apologist.

**Roots:** In order to understand where all this is going (regardless of the ups and downs of the current primary season), it's necessary to know where Buchanan, the man who personifies the right's latest ideological transformation, has been. Born into a family with roots in both the Old Confederacy and Irish Catholicism, Buchanan grew up in a household permeated with religion and right-wing politics in which Joe McCarthy, Francisco Franco and Douglas MacArthur reigned as a kind of secular holy trinity.

Buchanan's father was a strict isolationist whose attitude to the impending world war, according to his son's 1988 memoirs, *Right From the Beginning* (see page 18), was to "let Hitler and Stalin fight it out" without interference from Washington. Given that Hitler was the aggressor, there was at least a tinge of fascism in this attitude.

A quarter of a century later, however, the younger Buchanan adapted neatly as a young man to the more polished internationalist conservatism of Barry Goldwater and William F. Buckley, eventually winning a place for himself in the Nixon and Reagan administrations between bouts of punditry. Both presidents treated him more or less as a caged tiger to whom they tossed occasional pieces of raw meat. Buchanan learned to make all the appropriate laissez-faire globalist noises in return.

Since leaving the Reagan White House in 1987, however, Buchanan has returned to his roots. Most White House insiders-turned-pundits would be content to trade on their contacts while recycling the usual sonorous clichés. The ideologically restless Buchanan, however, sent out feelers to far-rightists who, until recently, had been beyond the pale of mainstream conservatism.

He joined something called the John Randolph Club, a traveling annual banquet of paleocons and "paleolibertarians" so loopily reactionary that some have taken to arguing that America's original sin lies in replacing the Articles of Confederation with a democratic-centralist (and hence doubly bad) U.S. Constitution.

**Friends in the right places:** Buchanan also established friendly relations with *Chronicles*, the paleocon intellectual monthly out of Rockford, Ill., and, even more surprising for a Washington pundit, gave every sign of reading it. He began exchanging ideas with Sam Francis, a columnist with *Chronicles* and the *Washington Times*, and Llewellyn Rockwell, president of the Ludwig von Mises Institute in Auburn, Ala., both of whom seem to have had an impact on his thinking.

The two comprise a kind of swinging door into the thinking of the new old right. Rockwell is of the paleolibertarian persuasion, meaning that he combines a nostalgia for the antebellum U.S. with free-market economics. Francis drinks his paleoconservatism neat, making him a protectionist, nationalist and cultural traditionalist. They disagree on free trade (Francis is anti, Rockwell pro) and immigration (Francis is hostile, while Rockwell is more favorable, although lately he says he's come to see the need to keep out alien cultural influences).

They also part company on the compassion issue. Rockwell toes the straight libertarian line to the effect that he's less interested in doling out charity than in doing away with the government policies that cause economic dislocation in the first place. Francis is more flexible—and perhaps a better indicator of where the Buchananite right is heading.

For instance, Francis didn't mind when his man Buchanan came out for extended unemployment benefits following a first-hand look at New Hampshire's economic devastation, something the candidate had previously opposed. "It surprised me," Francis said in a recent interview, "but at the same time I think it's consistent with his general outlook on America First and national solidarity, which is different from traditional conservative individualism."

Besides unemployment insurance, Francis says he could see his way to supporting retraining programs for workers in industries devastated by recession, not to mention counseling and other sorts of aid. "I also don't have any problem with industrial planning," he adds. "It's another dividing line between us and libertarians in that we think the U.S. or any nation has certain economic interests as a nation, and government policy ought to reflect those interests."

Most shocking of all, Francis adds that he doesn't even have a problem necessarily with national health insurance. Unlike libertarians, he says, "conservative traditionalists have no problem with programs for the 'deserving poor,' to use an archaic term. I hate the word compassion, but I think it's very important for conservatives to take care of their own."

Francis' ideas are pertinent because he was a co-founder with Buchanan of the short-lived America First Forum, the Washington think tank that was to serve as a vehicle for paleo views on trade and foreign policy before Buchanan put it on hold for the duration of the political campaign.

**Marx and Buchanan's common ground:** In case anyone is misled as to the benign nature of such views, let it be said that *Chronicles*, despite its high-toned erudition, is as nasty as they come. The magazine is faintly racist on the need to take a "hard-nosed approach to refugees fleeing the political turmoil, high population growth, and economic chaos of the Third World," as editor Thomas Fleming put it a few years ago. Its isolationism is of the unabashed pre-war variety. (A

recent issue celebrated the old America First Committee and Charles A. Lindbergh.) It's so sexually bigoted that Fleming fulminated in its pages against Cole Porter as a degenerate musical influence.

Curiously, it is also completely uninterested in economics. One could scour back issues of *Chronicles* looking for an economic idea and come up short. Indeed, paleoconservatism's elevation of the cultural ideal over economics marks a new stage on the journey to political regimentation. As leftists have long pointed out since a certain pair of German refugees sat down to a certain left-wing manifesto in 1849, nothing subverts traditional mores more effectively than free-market capitalism. It throws all fixed, fast-frozen relationships to the wind, causes all that is holy to be profaned, and so on. This is why Buchanan has taken aim at "vulture capitalism" and why paleocons are suspicious of free trade. Whether or not the "freedom" of the free market is illusory, it is too much for at least some paleocons to swallow.

Hence the paradox: unemployment insurance, industrial planning, and denunciations of unfettered capitalism turn out, in the hands of the far right, to be way stations on the road to national solidarity and cultural traditionalism. Assuming, paleoliberts notwithstanding, that traditionalism is backed by public authority, then cultural norms must eventually give way to cultural regimentation.

Instead of merely denouncing gays in print, a paleocon government might go one step further by driving them out of town, forcing them behind closed doors, or any of the other things considered routine in the 50s—which Buchanan, in his writings, seems to regard as a golden age. Instead of merely railing against feminists, it might resort to stronger measures as well. A Pat Buchanan—who in recent years has railed against Jews for their criticism of the Catholic Church, against Orthodox Serbia for its attacks on Catholic Croatia, etc.—is not someone to be held to American Civil Liberties Union niceties when it comes to civil rights at home.

**Compassion as a weapon:** Under the right conditions and in the right hands, therefore, conservative traditionalism can be the first step on the slippery slope to political authoritarianism. Expressions of sympathy for middle-class folk turned out of their homes pave the way not for greater humanity, but for less. Compassion thus becomes an ideological weapon in the hands of the hard right.

Not that Buchanan & Co. are alone on this score. David Duke (who is too much even for the paleos) and France's Jean-Marie Le Pen have made concerted efforts to capture the compassion issue and the environment issue. Decades earlier Nazi storm troopers attempted to steal the thunder of the left by raging against (mainly Jewish) monopolists and plutocrats allegedly strangling the German economy.

The far-right attempts to appropriate left-wing rhetoric because it's a way of harnessing the anger of ordinary hard-pressed citizens, particularly and traditionally the lower middle class, and because it has shown itself to be highly effective. Whether it works again in the '90s depends on the direction of the economy, among other things, and whether labor and the left will allow themselves to be fooled once again. But a growing section of the hard right, Buchanan included, appears determined to give the strategy the old college try. □



# EDITORIAL

## IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-0100

Member: Alternative Press Syndicate

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This issue (Vol. 16, No. 17) published March 25, 1992, for newsstand sales March 25-31, 1992.



LET THE SUN SHINE IN

## Carol Moseley Braun takes up where Harold Washington left off

Every little once in a while, here in the heartland of America, something wondrous happens. Nine years ago, it was the election of Harold Washington as mayor of Chicago. Two years ago it was the election of Paul Wellstone to the U.S. Senate in Minnesota. Last week it was the victory of Carol Moseley Braun over Sen. Alan Dixon in Illinois' March 17 Democratic primary.

Dixon, a man with a grin like the Cheshire Cat and the nickname of Al the Pal, epitomized everything slimy and infuriating about the men who rule America. He was a politician's politician, a man who had won all 22 of his previous elections. Since entering the Senate 11 years ago, Dixon had consistently supported Republican policies. He voted repeatedly for aid to the contras and to El Salvador, sided with Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts and was a true pal of military contractors and insurance companies. And he was one of a handful of Northern Democrats who voted to confirm Clarence Thomas' nomination to the Supreme Court.

That turned out to be his fatal error. No one really liked Al the Pal. Yet he had always managed to avoid offending major constituencies. And the large contributions from his corporate sponsors and special favors from the administration added to his aura of invincibility. But Thomas' confirmation, coupled with the shabby treatment of Anita Hill by the Senate Judiciary Committee, created passions that could not be finessed. After Dixon voted for Thomas, the question was not whether he would be opposed but who would oppose him.

Carol Moseley Braun quickly ended the speculation by announcing that she would enter the race. Braun is a spunky, outgoing former state legislator. As Cook County Recorder of Deeds—an office she won in 1988—she is the highest ranking African-American elected official in Illinois' largest county. Despite that, many Dixon opponents thought she was the wrong candidate to take him on. They believed that a man, or even a white woman, would have a better chance of defeating this powerful pro, and that Braun would end up as just another token candidate.

Apparently, Al Hofeld also believed this. Hofeld, a millionaire lawyer, had never before run for office—in fact he had often neglected to vote on election day. But he calculated that Braun would drain off many of the black votes that Dixon normally won, and that he could then unseat the state's senior senator with a massive TV campaign.

He then proceeded to spend a record \$4.3 million of his own money for a barrage of ads attacking Dixon as a Republican in Democrat's clothing. He covered the state with so many TV spots that a down-state newspaper ran a cartoon saying, "We interrupt this Hofeld commercial to bring you an important announcement." But it was all to no avail. Hofeld started in third place and stayed there.

Meanwhile, Braun was running what seemed to be a terrible race. Her first campaign manager quit after squabbling with other staff members. She raised almost no money. People who signed up to work for her were never called. Others who spontaneously sent in contributions were never thanked or contacted for more. Still others who were known prospects were not asked for help or money. And in the face of Hofeld's TV blitz, she was all but invisible. It wasn't until the last weekend of the campaign that her first TV spots appeared. Yet she remained in second place.

On election day it happened. African-Americans came out in force and 82 percent of them voted for Braun. In heavily Republican Du Page County, a suburb of Chicago and the state's second most populous county, young Republican women came out in droves to declare as Democrats and to vote for Braun. She got 40 percent of the county-wide vote while Dixon came in third. When the night was over, Braun had carried Chicago by 110,000 votes and gotten 26 percent of the vote downstate. She won the election with 38 percent to Dixon's 35 and Hofeld's 28.

And it wasn't just Braun's triumph. The wave of women who came out to vote for her also carried a record number of women candidates into office. On the North Side of Chicago Nancy Kaszak beat machine honcho Al Ronan by a wide margin in a race for state representative. In the various races for Cook County judgeships, 30 of the 40 women running—some of them rated unqualified—were nominated. On the Chicago lakefront, Judy Erwin won in a three-way race for the state senate nomination. In a field of 11 candidates seeking the Democratic nomination to Chicago's Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, three women ran and three won. One of them, an employee of the district's public relations office, beat the board president. And so it went.

Of course, Braun still has to win in November. But if the large turnout of blacks and women holds up for her, not only will she win, but she may well carry the state for whoever gets the Democratic presidential nomination. This could well be a reversal of 1988, when George Bush carried Illinois by 1 percent of the vote in an election where African-Americans stayed away from the polls in response to the shabby treatment afforded Jesse Jackson by the Democratic machine that year. So Carol Moseley Braun has not only saved the honor of Illinois, but she may also save the nation from another four years of George Bush.



# LETTERS

## Who? Why?

**S**PEAKING OF MYSTERIES, WRAPPED IN ENIGMAS. Inside of riddles, Peter Karman's "Cockburn conspiracy folly and the Warren Commission" (*ITT*, March 11) took second place to none.

Anybody who objects to the Warren Commission's lone-assassin theory should explain that if it wasn't Oswald acting alone and firing three shots from the sixth-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository Building, then (1) who were the conspirators? And (2) what specific motives would the assassins-conspirators have needed to pull it off?

These elementary points escaped Karman. The Warren Commission is rejected because, well, it was the Warren Commission. Alexander Cockburn's March 9 "In defense of the Warren Commission" (*The Nation*) was sent packing as well—it was tainted with the words of Warren Commission special counsel Wesley J. Liebeler, a sure sign of Cockburn's fallenness. And as for the crucial and utterly reasonable scientific notion of "replicable evidence" (i.e., physical evidence that can be tested any time, any place, and the interpretation of which can be quantified, and even falsified, if need be), Karman laughs it off because—well, you know the story.

JFK was "whacked," Karman thinks, because "coercive power structures deserve the right to destroy those who challenge the status quo"; because he got "out of line"; and because somebody wanted to send the message that "there's no threat to business as usual," even from a president.

Actually, had Karman decided to take this line of reasoning in the direction of some of the top figures of organized crime, I'd be willing to listen. But he doesn't mention it.

Or, if Karman were writing about the national security state's reasons for obliterating Iraq in the Persian Gulf massacre, again, he'd be making a lot of sense.

But when the same explanation is applied to the JFK assassination, problems arise. Not the least of which lay with the victim himself. JFK, a challenge to the status quo? Go on.

There are many reasons why crackpot theories of massive conspiracy and cover-up in the assassination of JFK appeal to so many people. Not the least of which is the sense of dread and impotence that afflicts the U.S. population. Such a population is ready for any explanation of events, as long as it also serves to explain their sense of passivity and utter powerlessness. And the more enigmatic the powers that be, the more awesome and mysterious, the less the explanation needs to make sense.

One will search in vain through Karman's attack on the Warren Commission and Cockburn for so much as a hint of who the conspirators might have been. It is not the responsibility of the dedicated ideologue to bother with such trivialities.

David Peterson  
Evergreen Park, Ill.

## What challenge?

**A** GOOD DEAL (THOUGH BY NO MEANS ALL) OF the recent chest-thumping over Oliver Stone's *JFK*—specifically, its rejection of the Warren Commission—has provided us with a form of religious experience. But none of them has been more extreme in

their devotion to the articles of the assassination religion than Peter Karman's "Cockburn's conspiracy folly and the Warren Commission" (*ITT*, March 11).

"Virtually the whole world comprehends quite rightly that John F. Kennedy was shot to death as the result of concerted actions by individuals with the requisite power, resources, technique and influence to carry out and cover up that crime," Karman writes. "Their motives, which were several and complementary, are known and easily deduced by the circumstances and outcomes of the event. The only things that are not and, almost assuredly, never will be learned are the names and specific roles of those who directed and carried out the killing."

Huh? Given such reasoning, the Kennedy assassination must have been the first conspiracy ever in which the accusers didn't need to first ascertain who the conspirators were in order to prove the existence of a conspiracy.

Karman gives us a conspiracy without giving us conspirators. To accept this as a rational alternative to the Warren Commission requires true fanaticism. Karman seems up to the task.

(At the top of Karman's short list of potential candidates is, no doubt, the military-industrial complex. However, I have a sneaking suspicion that Karman himself is really the one suffering from a complex here—and it has nothing to do with conspiracies. That is, Karman has an Alexander Cockburn complex. I'll leave any further elaboration of what this means up to the Lacanians out there.)

Only a religious fanatic or an outright kook could juxtapose self-contradictory assertions of this magnitude and have the gall to expect us to listen to him. But Karman seems untroubled by it all.

These criticisms don't even begin to do justice to the full scope of Karman's breach of logic and common sense. Another serious error is his contention that a vast array of "would-be, sideline and actual conspirators" had to do away with Kennedy because he was (as Oliver Stone et al. keep insisting) a "challenge" to the "status quo." Yet Karman gives no evidence to support this assertion. It is easy enough to guess why he didn't.

Of course, this is *not* to suggest that anyone should simply accept the findings of either the Warren Commission (1964) or the House Select Committee on Assassinations (1979).

Robert Bonner  
Chicago

## The rest of the story

**R**EGRETTABLY, DAVID FUTRELLE, IN HIS REVIEW OF *The Impossible H.L. Mencken*, edited by Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, with a forward by

Gore Vidal (*ITT*, Jan. 29) was as deluding as is the book itself. At least, Futrelle found the space to mention the anti-Semitism and racism that was not a minor part of Mencken's writings. Indeed, the book seems to be just another sycophantic outlet for Rodgers and, especially, Vidal, and is another application of the whitewash brush. Why Mencken is allowed his rightist thinking without public and deserved condemnation is a mystery.

No review of Mencken's works, as interesting as they may be, can be complete without an exposure of his Malthusian outlook fully documented by author Allan Chase in his excellent book, *The Legacy of Malthus*.

While Mencken's writings regarding his support for an anti-lynching bill which were against the mainstream and his urging of Congress to relax immigration restrictions to aid Nazi persecuted Jews were highlighted by this book, we must also be reminded that along with others of his day, like William Shockley and socialist and birth-control advocate Margaret Sanger, H.L. wrote extensively in support of selective sterilization (of women, of course) of the genetically inferior and was a keen and outspoken advocate of selecting out the "shiftless," physically and psychologically "undesirables" and the indigent in general, à la Thomas Malthus and Adolf Hitler or Joseph Mengele.

Mencken often suggested a scientific reduction of the so-called lesser lights in our society via genetic purification and selective sterilization. As he wrote in "Utopia by Sterilization" (*American Mercury*, August 1937), "...it would be a good thing if we could reduce the ... differential that now runs ... in favor of the unfit..." If not, Mencken claimed, "...there will be a wholesale degeneration of the American stock ... and ... the competence of the whole nation will sink to what is ... the valley of Appalachia..."

For H.L. Mencken, the way to raise the standards in America was simple: "...for the people of the upper I.Q. ... to develop a birth rate higher ... as that prevailing among the undernourished..." That was clearly his answer to the hunger of the Great Depression of the '30s. Rooting out the genetically inferior, as H.L. put it, was a "sterilization bonus."

And that, as the saying goes, is the rest of the story.

Don Sloan  
New York

## Enough!

**I**S IT REALLY NECESSARY FOR JOHN CANHAM-CLYNE (*ITT*, Feb. 19) to refer to presidential hopeful Sen. Paul Tsongas as a "technocratic Greek liberal from Massachusetts"? In other publications I have seen Sen. Tsongas described as "another Greek American liberal," "a Greek from Massachusetts," "a Greek-American in the footsteps of Michael

Dukakis," etc. I was taken aback by references to our political candidates by their ancestral ethnic background. Yet it is even more surprising to see that only Sen. Tsongas was selected for such racist treatment.

From daily reading of the press and periodicals, I have yet to see Pat Buchanan, Sen. Kerrey or Gov. Brown referred to as big-city Irish Catholics, or, for that matter, President Bush and Gov. Bill Clinton as hard-core WASPs. Definitely no mention at all is ever made that it is "old WASP money" or, for that matter, "new WASP money" that funds WASP candidates.

"Another Greek American from Massachusetts wants to be president," I have read often lately, but never have I seen in print the statement that another WASP wants to be president. Who does this country really belong to, anyway?

Angelo Dallas  
Glenview, Ill.

## Buchanan

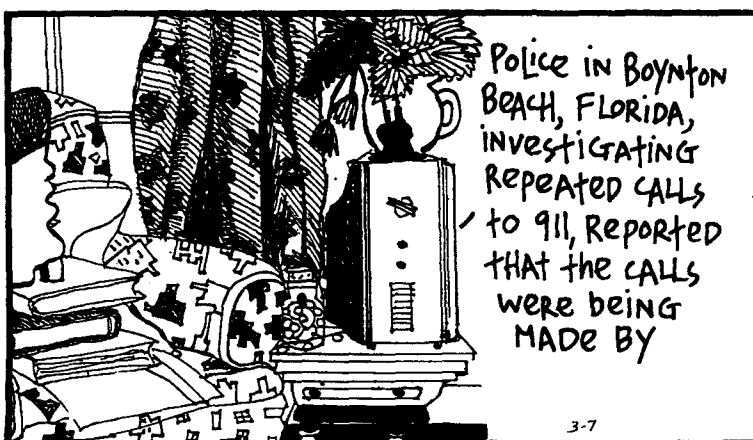
**F**OR FOUR YEARS I HAVE SUBSCRIBED TO *IN THESE TIMES* mostly in spite of John B. Judis' neoliberal ravings. Occasionally Judis will even surprise me with a perceptive insight or two. But his "Election '92" article (*ITT*, Feb. 26) and its portrayal of Patrick Buchanan as "one of the truly original figures in American politics" was beyond contemptible. Buchanan's neo-fascist, xenophobic, racist politics are about as original as the "Know Nothing Movement" and various other nativist attempts to blame the problems of the U.S. on Jews, blacks and immigrants.

For years Buchanan has displayed authoritarian and fascist tendencies, writing in his autobiography that his political heroes are Francisco Franco, Joe McCarthy and Chile's Gen. Augusto Pinochet. The man Judis describes as "personally pleasant and humorous" has championed accused Nazi war criminals and questioned the historical record about the gassing of Jews in Treblinka. He has used FBI memos to smear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., referring to King as "one of the most divisive men in contemporary history," while serving through the years as one of South Africa's staunchest defenders.

Unlike David Duke, Buchanan has credibility with the mainstream media, appearing as co-host of CNN's *Crossfire* and a regular guest on *The McLaughlin Group*. For that reason, he and the policies he espouses are far more dangerous than the ex-Klansman from Louisiana. When journalists like Judis toady up to Buchanan by waxing eloquently about his original ideas and pleasant and humorous personality, they become as dangerous and despicable as the man himself.

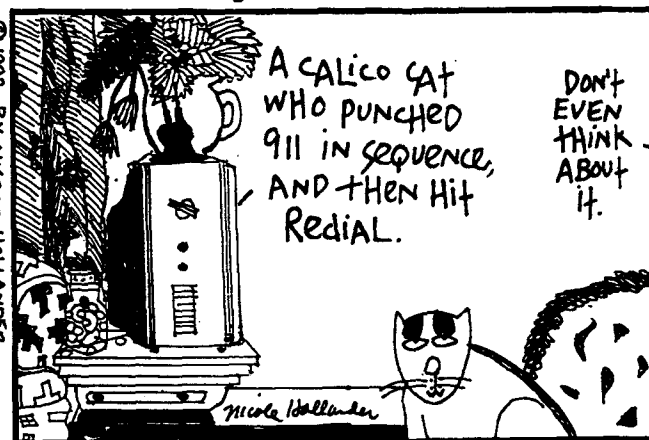
John S. Berman  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

## SYLVIA



3-7

## by Nicole Hollander



IN THESE TIMES MARCH 25-31, 1992 15



## A clunker of an environmental policy

Bad science, Republican opportunism and neoliberal environmental regulation are now massing forces for merciless assault on that heart muscle of American civilization, the old car or clunker.

The White House, against the deadline of a primary in the auto-producing state of Michigan, has formulated a plan whereby companies that buy old cars and then junk them could get "pollution credits." Under this wondrous regulatory procedure, recently given a ringing endorsement by Los Angeles' powerful South Coast Air Quality Management District, a polluting oil refinery could also buy a credit from another company needing less than its allocation and show a corresponding reduction on its books. Meanwhile children across the street from the polluting refinery would continue to show high levels of toxic chemicals in their lungs.

The scheme claims a double benefit. Consumers would turn in their polluting clunkers, getting anywhere from \$700 to \$1,000 from companies needing the credits. New car sales would be given a boost. In 1990 Unocal, a Los Angeles oil company, bought and scrapped 8,376 pre-1971 cars, paying \$700 each for them, in a bid to shift attention away from oil companies and toward the clunkers.

It's awe-inspiring to find so many bad ideas mustered under one roof, starting with the fact that auto thieves will now have a cash incentive to prey on poor persons' old Plymouths, Fords or Chevys, as well as rich persons' Mercedes and BMWs. I doubt whether companies receiving the clunkers

## ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

will be looking too hard at the paperwork.

The central fact is that the abused clunker may well be generating less pollution in today's urban environment than the late-model automobile, equipped with its catalytic converter. I say this as a collector and driver of old cars (ranging in antiquity from a 1957 Plymouth station wagon to a 1967 Chrysler 300, with Imperials, Valiants, Newports and a Dodge filling in the intervening nine years) who has long chafed under ignorant lectures about my supposed environmental irresponsibility.

The story begins more than 20 years ago, in the policy battles preceding the passage of the Clean Air Act. At that point the environmental policymakers and their scientific advisers were looking at two principle classes of compounds fueling the smog process: oxides of nitrogen and hydrocarbons in vapor form.

The bureaucrats decided that it would be easier to control hydrocarbons as emitted in vapors of various solvents including benzene, kerosene, gasoline, and also the partially burned fuel in automobile exhaust. Regulation would be a matter of controlling

nozzles at the gas pumps, adding catalysts to burn unused fuel, controlling vapors in cleaning establishments, and so forth.

This option seemed simpler than anything more than a minimal assault on oxides of nitrogen, generated by combustion of fuels such as coal, gas, kerosene and crude oil, and controlled by lowering the temperature of combustion. Simpler, maybe, but wrong. As a recent study sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences shows, two decades' worth of stringent regulatory effort on hydrocarbons has yielded very little in the reduction of air pollution, certainly nothing like the progress predicted in the original models.

One consequence of that faulty model was the modern car equipped with its catalytic converter. The converter is installed to further oxidize the hydrocarbons in the raw exhaust fuel. Remnants of this fuel are burned with the help of the platinum catalyst (which explains why the converter gets so hot).

But the converter also acts as a catalyst on sulfur, a component of all gasoline. In the combustion process in the engine's

cylinders, this sulfur is rendered into sulfur dioxide which, in turn, as it crosses the platinum in the catalytic converter, becomes sulfur trioxide which, with the addition of water (another consequence of gasoline combustion), becomes sulfuric acid. All cars equipped with catalytic converters are miniature sulfuric-acid factories.

One of the classic families of toxic compounds in smog is comprised of sulfates. Release sulfuric acid into urban air laden with metal particles and you produce metallic sulfates, many of which are toxic.

So, though the supposedly virtuous modern car, equipped with its catalytic converter, may be producing less hydrocarbons *in toto* than my old car, the hydrocarbons that it is releasing are more reactive, as can be sensed by sniffing a modern car's exhaust, which is far more irritating to the nose.

Though there is no doubt that 20 years of environmental regulation has reduced hydrocarbons, no one has yet demonstrated that in consequence the air is less toxic. Indeed the catalytic converters may have engendered greater toxicity, as early tests on rats—sedulously ignored—suggested. Bureaucratized science bred bad air, which clunker-napping and the pollution credits promise to render even fouler.

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By Norman Oder

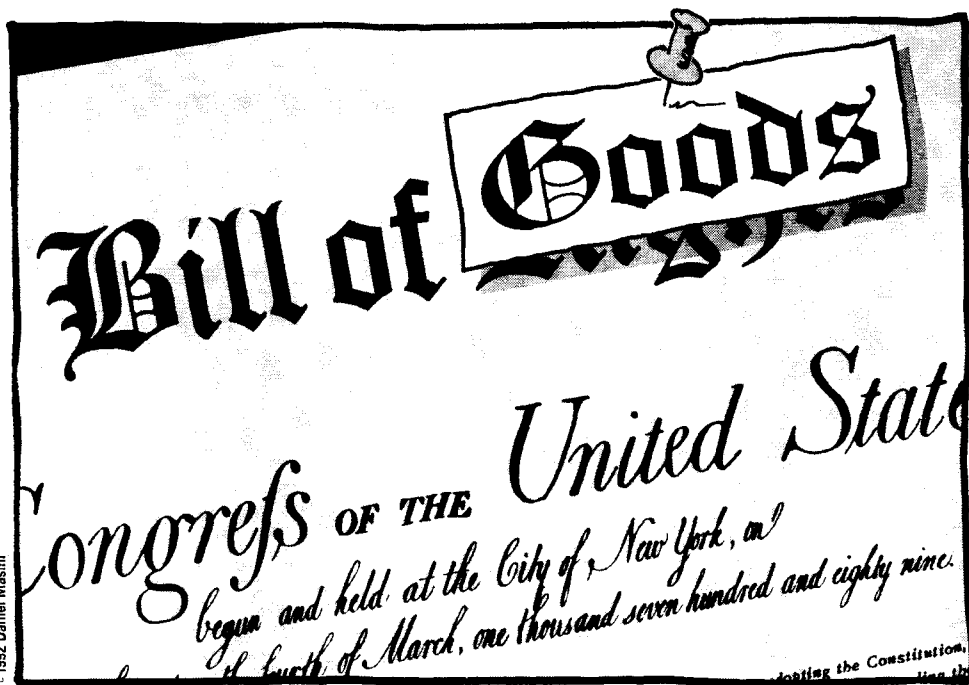
**T**HE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR BILL of Rights last December occasioned effusive praise from leading liberals such as *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis, who wrote that without such constitutional constraints, "I am convinced that the Framers' experiment in self-government would long ago have failed."

At about the same time, Roger Rosenblatt, essayist for the *MacNeil Lehrer NewsHour* and editor-at-large of *Life* magazine, presented his well-reviewed one-man show, *Free Speech in America*, in a New York theater. In his performance, he flitted jocularly from *Huckleberry Finn* to *The Weekly World News* to awkward presidential utterances. "Free speech," he declared several times, "is an instrument of revelation. It allows us to dream." Upon leaving the theater, I couldn't help but overhear Nadine Strossen, the New York University law professor who heads the American Civil Liberties Union, offer Rosenblatt glowing praise.

It might seem churlish to chide such people at a time when the Supreme Court retreats from protecting existing rights, and when liberal values such as free speech are attacked from the left. Still, there is something dismaying about the implicit smugness of good liberals like Lewis and Rosenblatt. Our Bill of Rights is, indeed, a glorious thing, but it has come to coexist with, as author Jonathan Kozol put it, "savage inequalities." Also, our speech may be mostly unfettered by government, but who gets to speak? If nothing else, the maverick presidential candidacy of former California Gov. Jerry Brown makes the point that political discourse is corrupted by money. And, as Yale law Professor Owen Fiss has noted, how valuable is free speech if we don't combat illiteracy?

There seems to be a gap in our constitutional vision, one that comfortable liberals have too often accepted rather than closed. As Stanford law Professor John Hart Ely wrote in his important work on judicial interpretation, *Democracy and Distrust*, "Experience suggests that there will be a systematic bias in judicial choice of fundamental values, unsurprisingly in favor of the values of the upper-middle, professional class from which most lawyers and judges ... are drawn." Thus the court and commentators have enshrined individual rights—expression, association, personal autonomy—as fundamental, Ely noted. "But watch some fundamental rights theorists start edging toward the door when someone mentions jobs, food or housing; those are important, sure, but they aren't *fundamental*," he wrote.

Perhaps we should recognize that our Bill of Rights is 200 years old, forged by men fighting against governmental tyranny, and also consult some more recent documents of fundamental rights, forged by people fighting for an even broader definition of freedom. For example, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, promulgated in 1948, endorses the full list of liberal checks on government, but also states, in Article 25, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services..." And this is the weakest of formula-



## Tenets of democracy and guaranteed rights

tions that have since entered the language of international human-rights covenants.

Such positive rights, as any lawyer knows, are not enforceable in the same way as negative checks on government. A judge can't run an entire state budget process. But even negative rights, such as the right to a fair trial, can have a price tag (maintaining a judicial system, providing legal aid), thus blurring some of the distinction, and judges have been known to take over state prison and mental health systems. Yes, it is possible that an emphasis on less-enforceable rights can weaken the protection of negative rights. But, I think, it is far more important to recognize obligations to provide food and shelter as rights, as fundamental to our humanity and, at the least, enshrine them in our human-rights documents, as guides to judicial interpretation and to the congressional agenda.

**South Africa:** I found it ironic that Anthony Lewis, in his column, breezily observed, "South Africa's new constitution, when it is written, will have one" (a bill of rights). Indeed, most major parties do endorse a bill of rights but differ significantly on its content, and the debate is vigorous. A classic liberal bill of rights is now accepted by the National Party government after years of hostility to a document enshrining individual, rather than racial group, rights. But the African National Congress, the most popular political organization, sees that as a way to help freeze the

economic status quo. Less than a decade ago, some black activists even briefly formed an "Anti-Bill of Rights Committee." The ANC's ambitious draft bill of rights, quoting liberally from established human-rights documents, addresses affirmative action, land reform and other obligations on government, though some fuzzy formulations provoke fears of a hegemonic central state.

This division remains a part of South Africa's political culture, even as the government-affiliated South African Law Commission, issuing two reports on a bill of rights, has pushed establishment thinking further and further toward the left, proposing a bill of rights that will take at least some account of socio-economic rights.

**Positive rights:** I noticed that acute division when, last September, I visited a conference sponsored by the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy, a South African think tank set up to bring different parties together and instill democratic values. Sitting around a seminar table in a hotel outside the port city of Durban were some 10 young members of the ANC, an equal number from the rival Inkatha Freedom Party, one member of the National Party, plus some speakers and guests.

From the beginning, it was clear there was a fundamental divide regarding the tenets of democracy and a bill of rights. The first speaker was Mervyn Frost, head of the politics department at the University of Natal. Frost, a liberal—which, in the

South African political spectrum, means moderate—praised democracy in all its abstraction. The right to vote was so important, he said, that people would prefer it even if they were worse off materially.

"No," interrupted Louisa Zondo. A young ANC lawyer, Zondo said democracy was meaningless unless it also ensured some measure of material gain.

Democracy, replied Frost, is not about the distribution of goods: "It's not what government does but how decisions are made."

Zondo was undeterred: "We have to have a system that can distribute as well as a system that can check.... I see them [the values of participation and distribution] as not ranking in a distinct hierarchy. I see them as forming a whole."

Said Frost, "People will choose democracy, even if distribution is worse, because in a democratic process you get your dignity recognized."

Zondo replied, essentially, that you can't eat dignity. "I'm not going to live in the squalor of KwaMashu [a township outside Durban] without those conditions being dealt with," she said. "I'd like to call myself a democrat, but it's difficult to do so on the basis you present. I think there's no need to have these trade-offs, that the autonomy of the individual reigns supreme over the other needs of the individual."

South Africa's deprivation, she said, renders the "democracy, as presented by Mervyn, meaningless to a large majority of the people."

Now Zondo's statements may sound Pollyannaish about the powers of government, considering that the correlation between democratic practice and prosperity is not necessarily direct. After all, some juntas have delivered the goods. However, Zondo's argument with Frost shows that, in South Africa (as well as some other developing countries), the notion of rights and democracy is associated with relief of deprivation, not just with checks on tyranny. Forging a governmental structure to navigate that balance, of course, will be tricky.

With its history of exploitation and African protest, leavened by indigenous socialism and an anomalously vigorous Communist Party, South Africa is a testing ground for one notion of democracy. The formerly communist countries of Eastern Europe, running pell-mell to embrace capitalism, are another. As we congratulate ourselves on our Bill of Rights and "the end of history," we should remember that the free market, however efficient, can be a cruel one, if the rights to be protected from government are the only rights we cherish.

**Norman Oder**, a freelance writer, was a 1989-90 journalism fellow at Yale Law School and visited South Africa twice last year.

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## Loose Buchanan's less-than-catholic appeal

"To know what conservatives are thinking, you have to read Pat Buchanan's *Right from the Beginning*."

—George Bush, 1988

"I got a Catholic block."

—Sonic Youth

By Mark G. Judge

JUST READ PAT BUCHANAN'S *RIGHT from the Beginning*—I wanted to know what conservatives are thinking, as they themselves don't seem to have a clue. And, loath as I am to admit it, turning the pages I did feel a sense of camaraderie with the old Nazi, and more than a few pangs of recognition.

I was born and raised in Washington, D.C., a small city (Buchanan's generation still calls it a town) where people—especially Catholics like Pat—tend to be clannish and provincial. Pat grew up in Chevy Chase, a tranquil, elm-lined suburb on the northern edge of the District where my father, Joseph—the son of a Washington Senators baseball star—was also raised. My father's old house, where his sister still lives, is just a few blocks from Chestnut Street, the Buchanans' old residence.

**Pat answers:** My dad and "Paddy Joe" Buchanan belonged to the same parish, Blessed Sacrament (parish allegiance was how Catholics identified each other in the '40s and '50s); they attended the same Jesuit high school, Pat's beloved Gonzaga; and—while my father was born in 1928, a full 10 years before Pat—they hung out at the Hot Shoppes on Connecticut Ave., were arrested by the same police, and knew the same kids. (To this day, Chevy Chase's shady sidewalks and roomy colonial homes have retained their woodsy, serene quality. Just think of those idyllic, retro ads for Mazda where the white guys are shooting hoops in front of their *Leave It to Beaver* house.)

For Pat, Washington in the '40s and '50s was a conservative Eden. "For those of us raised in the old Church," he writes of the "halcyon days of American Catholicism" from 1941 to 1961, "today's calls for 'Marxist-Christian dialogue' will always seem ludicrous. Either men are, or they are not, children of God, with immortal souls, destined for eternity and possessed of God-given rights no government can take away. If they are, Communism is rooted in a lie; and every regime built upon that lie is inherently illegitimate. We were taught that, and we believed that, then—and we still do."

Pat keg-partied and rumbled his way through adolescence, once getting suspended from Georgetown University for fighting with cops (my dad wanted to be a playwright and decided on Catholic University instead of Georgetown because of CU's strong drama program) and eventually wound up at Columbia School

of Journalism, where his radicalism frightened the other students and led to his current position as mouthpiece for the right. My dad—same neighborhood, same schools, same faith—went to *Life* magazine after graduation in the early '50s, then wrote speeches for President Kennedy before settling at the National Geographic Society, where he recently retired not only a Catholic but a devout anti-Reaganite and father of four children, one of whom is a frequent contributor to *In These Times*, a socialist rag out of Chicago.

So what happened? From *Right from the Beginning* you'd think everyone raised Catholic in Chevy Chase in postwar America slid into Goldwaterism as inevitably as Christ trudged toward His death on Calvary. Not that many didn't. Indeed, I remember well the received conservatism of many of my Catholic school friends, who are the children of the people in Paddy's autobiography. But some of us slipped through the cracks, or, as my dad might say, "got the hell away from that Chevy Chase crowd."

**The TP hurl:** I suppose if I ever met Pat and mentioned my father, Gonzaga '46, he'd smile broadly and shake my hand—until I said that dad thinks Nixon and his henchmen were "brownshirts" and Reagan is a baboon. If I followed that up with a reminder that I once dated his niece and almost toilet-papered his brother Hank's house, Pat'd probably hurl.

I was raised in Potomac, Md., a suburb Pat accurately describes as once being "the country" before a grotesque building boom in the '80s turned it into a palatial playground (whose tony Addams Family real es-

tate has gone bust in the '90s). I went to Our Lady of Mercy parochial school in the '70s and then Georgetown Prep (the latter is mentioned fairly often in *Right*) in the early '80s, when Prep's star had ascended while Gonzaga had almost closed down due to lack of enrollment.

It was my freshman year at Prep that I dated Pat's niece Rachel, who's now working for Uncle Pat's campaign. Our relationship didn't last very long, but we remained friends, and I'll never forget the night, years later, when we were both seniors, that I got busted trying to single-handedly "roll" her house.

Rachel was a student at Stone Ridge, the all-girl school in Rockville, Md., that sits majestically on a hill about two miles down the road from Prep. "The Ridge" was roundly despised by Prep for reasons I can only guess were hormonal, and we spent most of our senior year making the supercilious, preppy co-eds there miserable. One of our favorite stunts was to go out late at night in a large mob, drink about 800 beers and arrive in a high-octane caravan to "do" a particular girl's house. This meant cover her house, trees and front yard with enough toilet paper to supply the Redskins' offensive line for a year.

(Preferably, the victim's house would be empty, ensuring the time for a masterful job. We often worked late into the night on a single vacant property, and I remember laughing so hard I was in tears while driving away, caravan horns honking, from a house and front yard that were virtually invisible behind a thick, meticulous wrap of White Cloud.)

One bitterly cold night in the dead of winter we decided to "get" Rachel

Buchanan, who lived in a rustic, wooded area close to my house—"way out in the country," as the guys from the District, Chevy Chase and Bethesda put it. Her house was on a hill about 100 yards off the narrow road that snakes through the woods and out to the horse farms in west Potomac, and it was impossible for the caravan to approach from the front with stealth—the driveway, flanked with tall trees, was more like a path, narrow and steep and slick after a recent snowfall. And if we did reach the open of the hilltop, we would surely be seen by anyone inside.

We tried to attack from the back and circled around to the far side of the hill, but on that side a giant hedge

### WASHINGTON

blocked the way. The house was a fortress, flanked by woods in the front and a 20-foot hedge in the back, and we drove off in frustration only minutes after arriving.

**A lone assassin:** Late that night, after about six beers too many, I decided to go back solo. I figured that if I could singlehandedly roll the Buchanans' house I would be canonized in the halls of Georgetown Prep and immortalized in Washington. I sped past my own neighborhood and over the creek to the dark, desolate road in the woods. Defiantly, I pulled my mother's burgundy Oldsmobile up the driveway and onto the grassy quad in front of the house. I fumbled through my supply in the back seat and emerged from the car with a fresh roll.

My bravado didn't last very long when a light on the second floor went on. I panicked, dropped my roll and jumped back into the car, slamming the door behind me. I pumped the accelerator, shifted into reverse and pulled away. About halfway down the treacherous driveway, I jerked the wheel right to follow the crooked black line behind me and the car slid left on a patch of ice, crashing into a ditch. I stomped on the accelerator and shifted from reverse to drive and back again. No use. I was stuck, drunk and it was 4 o'clock in the morning.

Almost instantly, Rachel appeared at the top of the driveway. She wasn't alone. There were four guys from Gonzaga with her—there had been some Catholic function that night, and they had arrived at the Buchanans' shortly after our caravan had left—and the guys weren't very happy to see an intrepid Prepper who was obviously up to no good. One of them, whose fat Irish face and beady eyes I'll never forget, wanted revenge, and proceeded to start letting the air out of one of the back tires. By that time I was so fed up with my botched evening I didn't

particularly want to live and told him to knock it off. Inexplicably, he did.

And Rachel even came to my defense, telling her companions not only to leave me alone but to help me push the car out—I guess she still had a soft spot for me. We heaved the car out of the ditch. Later, I wrote Rachel a letter of apology, and to this day we laugh about it.

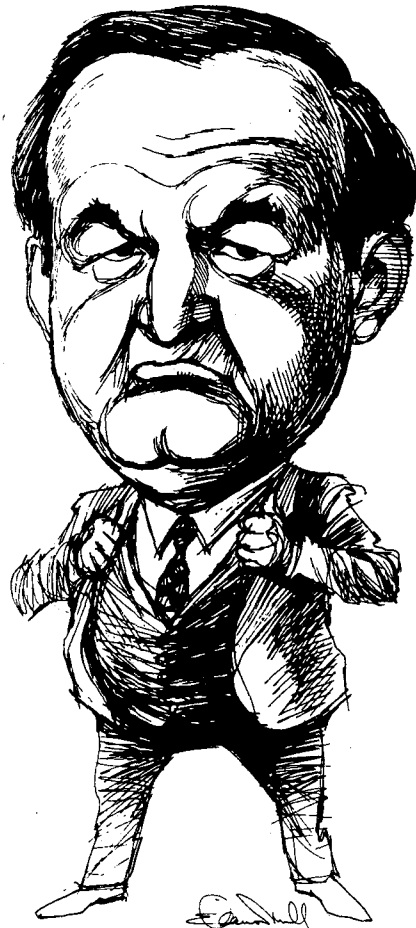
**Tight-knit group:** The whole episode could have been lifted from *Right from the Beginning*. Indeed, I was shocked by how much Pat's book plucked a responsive chord in my memory, particularly the parts about the lifelong attachments made at Catholic high schools. I remember the disappointment of many of my Prep classmates after returning to Washington after their first semester away: many felt that college was dull and their new classmates humorless compared to the life in Washington, with its parties, beach trips, dances and tight-knit family of parishioners who had all known each other since childhood. "I always felt that I 'went' to Georgetown," Pat writes about his university days. "I did not belong there as I did at Gonzaga. And, after I left, I never went back.... Our friends were the guys with whom we grew up, raised hell on weekends and played ball.... We were 'local' and, in some ways, we still are."

I've said the same thing myself, but that's as far as I'll go with Pat. I admit, *Right from the Beginning* appealed to me—at least before it degenerated into rabid right-wing litanies in the last two chapters—and it's that warm feeling of nostalgia that Buchanan uses to lure voters: the past as prologue. The "pit bull of the American right," as George Will dubbed him, argues that just because the City on a Hill of his youth crumbled into post-Vatican II Babylon doesn't mean that conservatives can't attain a society as morally unambiguous as a sermon at Blessed Sacrament, even if by unconstitutional force.

But this kind of society can't ever exist, if in fact it ever did. America—including the Catholics—is growing up, even if Pat won't. And one man's tradition is another's blasphemy: My own father is living proof that at least one Catholic in Chevy Chase sees conservatives as insane maniacs with bad hair. And radicalism didn't abruptly appear during the '60s as miraculously as the Immaculate Conception. It had roots, as sure as Pat's belligerent conservatism.

As Barbara Ehrenreich—who's proudly Scotch-Irish, just like Pat—once wrote, "Dissent is also a 'traditional value,' and in a republic founded by revolution, a more deeply native one than smug-faced conservatism can ever be." I should write that one down in case I ever see Rachel. Although, come to think of it, we never did talk much about politics.

**Mark G. Judge** is a writer living in Maryland.



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**Labor and Desire: Women's Revolutionary Fiction in Depression America**  
By Paula Rabinowitz  
University of North Carolina Press  
236 pp., \$29.95 hardcover,  
\$12.95 softcover

By Alan Wald



## Rewriting a genre and a generation

rigorous empirical research into the writings of women in the '30s combined with participation in the ongoing dialogue among socialist-feminists about the complex interactions of class, gender and cultural production. The result is an evocative trope of "labor and desire."

The argument, however, is pursued in concert with more conventional literary concerns. Indeed, *Labor and Desire* is powerful testimony that the new revisionists of the canon are not nihilists vis-à-vis traditional study; rather, they are out to expand and adjust what has been known through a broader contextualization and the unearthing of silenced voices. Take, for example, Rabinowitz' attitude toward those scholars who have shaped the study of U.S. literary radicalism as we have known it—Daniel Aaron, Walter Rideout, and a few others (including myself). Her interest is not primarily in belaboring us for failing to introduce, in books published 10, 20 or 30 years ago, the theories and texts to which she has devoted this book. Rather, she strives to show the advantages to all of our scholarship that will come about through the expansion, augmentation, rethinking and reseeing that comes when gender serves as a category of knowledge to reconstruct literary history.

**Breaking the mold:** Beyond this, Rabinowitz also builds cogently upon the observations of others about the influence of documentary and reportage strategies on radical fiction of the '30s. She notes that the method of "documentary expression" was one that combined personal narrative with the exposition of class struggle, thereby connecting "traditionally feminine forms of writing to more conventionally masculine ones." Her observations on the refiguration of the traditional types of women's novels under the impact

of the Great Depression and the left are compelling as well.

Flowing from this rich convergence of theoretical work tested against numerous texts, and animated by a commitment to the reform of consciousness far beyond the walls of academe, are many strikingly original contributions for which Rabinowitz' book ought to be widely discussed. To me, one of several crucial features of the work is how Rabinowitz proposes to resolve part of the riddle of the relations among political commitment, critical theory and literary practice in the Red Decade.

Scholars long ago demonstrated the tendency toward a mechanical correlation of changes in the Communist Party's political line and the literary policy promoted by its leading journals and critics. This is most famously evident in the switch from the "proletarian" (1928-34) to the "Popular Front" (1935-39) cultural perspective, which brought about corresponding changes in literary themes, styles and forms, and even venues for organizing writers. Nevertheless, contemporary cultural workers have persisted in unearthing all sorts of remarkable and unparalleled novels and poems from both halves of the era that seem to offer far more than such a closed classificatory system suggests. Some of these writings have been coming back into print through the laudable efforts of the Feminist Press, Monthly Review, West End Press and various university publishing houses.

In regard to left-wing women writers, Rabinowitz suggests that the reason for a discrepancy between official theory and actual practice flows from a failure to acknowledge the "masculinist" nature of the literary strategies and policies of the '30s. Many male writers of the time, espe-

cially Communist Mike Gold, author of *Jews Without Money* (1930) and a *Daily Worker* columnist, tended to promote a "proletarian realism" in which all features of the category of the "proletariat" were male.

Counterposed to this was an aesthetic associated with femininity and effeminacy, subjectivity, '20s modernism and middle-class decay. Later, Philip Rahv, in attacking Communist literary policy from a quasi-Trotskyist perspective, established an influential methodology that correlated Party line to literary style, oblivious to how this model silenced the practice of women writers on the left whose art was also shaped by female labor and desire. Rabinowitz shows that, once one introduces the issue of "gender"—especially female sexuality and maternity—into the equation, the simplistic approaches of Gold and Rahv to the decade break down and new categories are required.

Rabinowitz is generous not only in her manner of correcting previous scholarship by showing the costs of our blindspots, but also in the way she builds upon and gives credit to many of those whose work has facilitated her own insights, including Susan Suleiman and Deborah Rosenfelt. Her book is as much constructive as de(con)structive. In place of the mechanical schemes of Rahv and the influential literary typologies found in Walter Rideout's *The Radical Novel in the U.S.* (1956), Rabinowitz argues for the rethinking of female revolutionary fiction as an independent genre.

**Cutting edges:** This enables her to present some breathtaking readings of texts such as Clara Weatherwax's long-traduced *Marching! Marching!* (winner of the New Masses-John Day Company proletarian novel prize for 1935), Meridel Le Sueur's *The Girl* (first published in its entirety in 1978), Tillie Olsen's *Yonnondio* (issued in 1974 with previously unpublished chapters), Tess Slesinger's *The Unpossessed* (1934), Lauren Gilfillan's *I Went to Pitt College* (1934), Josephine Herbst's *Rope of Gold* (1939) and Mary McCarthy's *The Company She Keeps*. Dispersed throughout the book are less devel-

oped but equally provocative observations on many other works (including a few novels by men).

Many of Rabinowitz' insights about genre theory, "minor literature" and the prefiguring in '30s fiction of "post-modern materialist-feminist" critical concerns, are on the cutting edge of current cultural debate.

A book that reaches so far beyond its peer scholarship is not without some risky and problematical features. The rhetoric of "labor and desire" is sometimes difficult to translate into clear analytical categories. More important, Rabinowitz is up against an audience—scholars as well as cultural workers—unfamiliar with much of the material that she introduces on a relatively high level of sophistication. Since we still lack a collective biography of Red women authors (something analogous to a female version of Daniel Aaron's *Writers on the Left*), there may be a hiatus before parts of her intended audience can catch up with her.

Finally, a book as stimulating as this can only provoke readers to new inquiries. How might the intersection of "race" along with gender and class affect her models (a subject that will have to be explored in regard to later decades, since, as Rabinowitz observes, explicitly left-wing novels by women of color in the '30s are few)? What about the factoring in to her paradigms of other influential elements, such as regional, ethnic and religious subcultures?

Such queries only confirm the richness of the major thrust and specific literary interpretations proffered in *Labor and Desire*. Rabinowitz makes an impressive case for the potential breadth, soundness and contemporary relevance of her method in her concluding observations about Alice Walker's *Meridian* (1976), Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter* (1979), and Marge Piercy's *Vida* (1979). After finishing *Labor and Desire*, I read a neglected resistance novel of the McCarthyite witch hunt, Martha Dodd's *The Searching Light* (1955), from the perspective of Rabinowitz' methodology. I came away feeling quite convinced that, in addition to everything else, she has also elaborated a viable theoretical apparatus that will be useful when we begin to extend our understanding of this generic tradition into the even more neglected decades (for the left) of the '40s and '50s. *Labor and Desire* is both a grand summation and a bold leap forward. In sensitivity and insight, Rabinowitz outdistances all previous efforts to achieve a unity of radical generations, traditions and methodologies. ■

Alan Wald, cultural editor of *Against the Current*, teaches American culture at the University of Michigan. A new collection of his writings, *The Responsibility of Intellectuals: Selected Essays on Marxist Traditions in Cultural Commitment*, will be published by Humanities Press in May.

**Rabinowitz builds cogently upon the observations of others about the influence of documentary and reportage strategies on radical fiction of the '30s.**



## Singers howling in the wilderness of obscurity



Rocking hard on the margins: Billy Childish epitomizes the endurance and drive of outsider musicians.

### Peel Sessions

Kevin Coyne  
Strange Fruit/Dutch East India

### Surfin' in Harlem

Swamp Dogg  
Volt

### I Am the Billy Childish

Billy Childish  
Sub Pop

By John Dougan

**N**OTHING CONCENTRATES A PERFORMER like living on the edge, especially when the edge is as close to popular acclaim as one gets. Whether it's

by choice or by overwhelming public apathy, the chronically misunderstood fringe performer generally faces a lifetime in the nether regions of cultdom, musing Brando-like about being forced to take a dive when they were contenders all along.

Or not. It's a canard to suggest that cult artists have cultdom thrust upon them by a stupid, uncaring public. For every misunderstood and ignored next-big-thing I've ever met, I've met an equal number of real and imagined geniuses who couldn't have cared less about demographics, market demands or the general state of rock'n'roll. They had a vision, they

expressed it as best they knew how, and if you didn't like it, too bad. Ultimately, their art was more about pleasing themselves and chasing their pesky, idiosyncratic muse than about

### MUSIC

modifying it for mass consumption. **Critical corner:** What's great about these performers is that they give rock critics something to write about. There isn't a critic worth their weight in floppy disks who isn't thrilled by the prospect of scribbling 5,000-10,000 words for little or no pay, rigorously detailing the history of any

as-yet-undiscovered cult-genius, especially when this demi-icon is releasing his or her 20th LP to mass indifference. After all, there's nothing more satisfying than when one of these performers meets with fluke success and you become the critic with the foresight to expose their heretofore ignored talents to the world at large, exponentially enhancing your hipness quotient.

If I told you that I was innocent of any of the above charges, I'd be lying. Especially since I consider Kevin Coyne, Swamp Dogg and Billy Childish perfect examples of the undeservedly ignored artist syndrome.

Coyne and Dogg have been kicking and screaming since the hippie era. Childish is more of a newcomer, but he's been spewing primitive, rough-and-ready, garage rock since the halcyon days of punk.

What links them is their ability to exist, albeit with difficulty, as artists *way* outside the mainstream. Sure, there are plenty of people more avant garde, obscure, audacious and demanding than these three, but what those genius wannabees don't have that these guys do is a consistently good body of work. I've lost track of how many LPs Coyne has released either as a solo act or with



his old band Siren, but I own 14. Swamp Dogg's back catalog is mostly out of print, but, counting a couple of "greatest hits" packages, is probably in double digits. As for Childish, well, his new double-disc retrospective says it all: 50 songs from 50 albums.

**Fringe benefits:** Only someone who doesn't get out much would tell you that a complete catalog of these artists is worth owning. In fact, what makes the Coyne and Childish discs so good is that they are perfect and succinct introductions to their skewed worlds. Both are obsessed with acting as de facto spokesman for the ridiculed of the world. And they do so effectively, because that's precisely how they perceive themselves.

Short, stubby, mangy-haired, with a mere slit of a mouth that emits a thick, howling voice, Coyne looks like a perverse caricature of the quintessential friendless outcast—only he's really pissed, and wants to let you know it. In fact, the ultimate Coyne image may be the jacket of his live LP *In Living Black and White*. On the front, wearing an ill-fitting suit, Coyne, a twisted grin plastered on his face, is bowing in mock politeness to an unseen audience. On the back we see the same shot from the rear which reveals that his right hand is clutching an open straight razor.

Coyne's best songs are as funny, jarring and unsettling as that image. Steeped in irony and odd, unexpected juxtaposition, Coyne's horrors tend to be quotidian: miscommunication, petty arrogance, emotional cruelty. In "The Miner's Song," the working-class hero protagonist is also vile and abusive to his family, allowing the desperation to come full circle. And while he's critical of mindless hedonism in a song like "Dance of the Bourgeoisie," he doesn't exempt himself from criticism. And that ability to see a bit of himself in those he despises makes his anger more cutting and more potent.

What's amazing about Coyne is that after all these years he hasn't taken the easy way out and totally given in to misanthropy. Which is something I was sure would happen

to Swamp Dogg. That is, until I heard *Surfin' in Harlem*. Dogg's still beating the drum as America's great undiscovered African-American musical genius. But, it's hype I'd wager he only partly believes. Ever since he unleashed his soul-grunt masterpiece *Total Destruction To Your Mind* on an unsuspecting, and uncaring, public 22 years ago, it's all been downhill. Sure, he's made plenty of records, done plenty of sessions and written plenty of songs (according

**What links these artists is an ability to exist way outside the mainstream.**

**There are plenty of people more avant garde, obscure and demanding, but most lack a consistent body of work.**

to Dogg, he writes songs about as frequently as the average person brushes his or her teeth), but he's still on the outside looking in. And, as good as it is, *Surfin'* won't change that.

What separates Dogg from his peers (aside from his distinctive, throaty, multi-octave voice) is his full-blown dementia that turns ostensibly conventional soul/r&b records into bizarre little chunks of serio-comic megalomania. For every track as obvious and pro forma as "She's Built to Kill," there's one as completely gonzo as "Appelle-Moi Noir," which, over the course of eight convoluted minutes, tries to explicate the enormity of racism by referring to numerous people of color as some type of "nigger." It's daring, but it's also a little unfocused and insensitive. And, for sheer impact, it doesn't carry one iota of the power of the disc's closer, "I've Never Been to Africa (And It's Your Fault)," the funniest, most gut-wrenching song he's written in years. A complex diatribe, it's Afro-centric theme is pre-

dictable, but he balances his back-to-the-motherland ("Where I'll be the boss") sentiment with a brief history of disenfranchisement. It's far and away his cleverest moment. And I bet he knows it, too.

**Avant garage:** Clever pretty much sums up Billy Childish. Clever because he's carved out a niche for himself bashing the hell out of the same British Invasion-style three-chord garage rock song since 1979. He really has released 50 LPs with a variety of bands (Pop Rivits, Thee Mighty Caesars, Del Monas, the Milkshakes, Thee Headcoats), that for the most part sound recorded and mixed in about an hour. While he's also known for his woodcuts, poetry and dyslexia, what he is first and foremost is a purveyor (better make that slavish adorer) of that classic mid-'60s shit-rock sound: trebly guitars, cardboard drums, Vox organs.

He's equal parts mad genius and bratty goofball (his song "Fun in the U.K." is a cheerful retort to the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in the U.K.") and because he's so unfailingly sure of himself and his "vision," it's unlikely that anyone will release a more honest, artful (but not arty) record this year. Hurry, Sub Pop is releasing only 1,500 of this inexpensive double-CD set.

"Music should be entertaining. People should come and enjoy themselves... If they don't like what they hear, they can piss off." Words uttered by Childish, but Coyne or Swamp Dogg could've just as easily made the same claim. In a way, it could be the unofficial credo of the cult performer, because it defiantly and unapologetically codifies their *raison d'être*. It'd be a hell of a difficult marketing campaign, but at least it would be honest and not condescending. Which, really, is the kind of quiet respect most cult artists would kill for.

These records are available from: Strange Fruit Dutch East India: P.O. Box 800, Rockville Center, NY 11571-0800; Volt Records: 10th & Parker, Berkeley, CA 94710; Sub Pop: 1932 1st Ave., Suite 1103, Seattle, WA 98101.

John Dougan is a critic living in Minneapolis.

## Public television

Now that the Bush administration has guarded its right flank by forcing John Frohnmayer from the beleaguered National Endowment for the Arts, the next target is public broadcasting. In February, several senators delayed public broadcasting's congressional funds approval, ostensibly concerned about left-tilting content on television. In early March, senators opened debate, only to shut it down again, possibly for months. In the brief window, Sen. Robert Dole (R-KS) set the tone by charging that liberals were using the system to plug their own causes. (Given the positions of the Democratic Party and the subjects of the more controversial programs—death squads in El Salvador, African-American gay identity and the intifada, among others—this charge takes real imagination.)

Thanks to a Heritage Foundation backgrounder, there are also conservative proposals. Some would like to defund public broadcasting—something the Heritage Foundation has been advocating since 1980, and almost succeeded in doing in the early '80s. Others would like closer administrative control over programming. When the Corporation for Public Broadcasting informed Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) that it was legally prohibited from scheduling or distributing programs (that's PBS' job), Helms called the answer "malarkey" and "the old shuffle game." Ironically, it was Congress' distrust of liberals that created PBS in the first place, as a creature of the local stations rather than the dreaded Eastern establishment liberals.

Among the targets of right-wing wrath is the Independent Television Service (ITVS), created in 1989 by a Congress made aware of public broadcasting's poor record in showcasing American diversity. ITVS has just given out its first grants. Although its job is to do the experimenting and risk-taking so difficult for a system currying favor with viewers, corporations and legislators, the ITVS is now being reviled for "lack of balance."

All careful observers agree that public broadcasting needs fixing. It needs a better definition of its mission as a public service, a thorough cleaning of its bureaucratic underbrush and secure funding that lets it provide the critical, thoughtful coverage for kids, young people and adults that commercial stations don't. (Items in point: As of February, network coverage of the presidential campaign was down by more than half from last time. MTV's latest programming addition is a news show called, appropriately, *Like We Care*. Shows such as *On Scene* and *Emergency Call* air ambulance footage from real rescues and call it "reality programming." And now, even the rest-easy Federal Trade Commission is getting hot under the collar about ubiquitous "infomercials," commercials disguised as programs.)

The Republicans' using public broadcasting as a football in the electoral campaign won't fix it, though, and the Heritage Foundation's privatization schemes are a good way to kill it.

## Now we know

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas was the author of an appeals court decision written last year that gutted affirmative action in mass media. The decision, only now released, declared that a standing rule giving preference for women in assigning broadcast station licenses is unconstitutional. The preference had been in place for 14 years.

## Pinocchio and fries

Burger King has installed videocassette players and monitors playing Disney programs in some children's play areas in its restaurants. The fast food giant, which may do promotion for Disney, sees itself "as being in the retailing business as well as serving Whoppers," said a media relations staffer to *Advertising Age* magazine.

## Resources

*Roar! The Paper Tiger Guide to Media Activism*, published by Paper Tiger, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012, sports the slogan: "Rarely Organized, Always Radical." So true, and so unfortunate. Paper Tiger, a pioneer in the use of cable access television for media criticism, overexemplifies its style in this resource guide. It includes utopian, hortatory essays encouraging people to make their own media, descriptions of Paper Tiger projects, and a how-to section that includes schematics on how to build your own radio transmitter. Finally, there's a reading and resource list. Paper Tiger's address books badly need updating—the listings for *In These Times* and at least one other organization are wrong.

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# Democrats

Continued from page 10

such a location.

In his improvised, shoestring campaign, most of Brown's positions are about as well thought out as his schedule. Yet on some economic points he breaks sharply with Clinton and Tsongas: much more in favor of public investment, he also sees a stronger role for government not just in encouraging innovation but directing it into energy-efficient, environmentally sound technologies. When asked for details, he's prone to argue that the major obstacle to solving problems is the absence of political will—and corruption of the political system by big-money politics.

Brown's past record is mixed (a fine labor and environmental record, disastrous endorsement of California's Proposition 13 tax limitation). His persona is wild, quirky and abrasive, to be charitable. He's a convenient vehicle of protest, but it's hard to take him seriously as a candidate.

Brown's greatest programmatic weakness is his flat rate tax plan: a 13 percent tax on all income (minus rent, mortgage interest and charities) plus a 13 percent value-added tax

on business (effectively a national sales tax such as that used in many European countries). This would replace current personal and corporate income taxes, Social Security taxes, gasoline taxes and most other federal taxes.

Brown argues that the current tax code is most readily exploited by the rich and, overall, is not progressive. Yet progressive tax rates always invite tax avoidance schemes. Brown asserts that under his plan, revenue will be the same but corporations and the rich will pay much more.

But a sales, or value-added tax, imposed on business is typically passed on to consumers and thus tends to be regressive. It can also be very complex. Also, by dropping the gasoline tax, Brown would lose any incentive to energy efficiency that such taxes create.

Even with his flat tax, Brown can't resist the old tax break lure: His urban strategy centerpiece is tax-free enterprise zones, and he also advocates investment incentives. Indeed, his whole plan represents a tax break for business that far exceeds what Bush proposes: first year depreciation of all equipment and, at most, a 13 percent capital gains tax.

Citizens for Tax Justice (CTJ), a respected

labor-backed tax reform group in Washington, D.C., argues that revenue would drop by about \$200 billion a year under Brown's plan. Raising rates to 16 percent to keep revenue stable would triple taxes on poor families and hike taxes for a middle-income family by about 31 percent. Meanwhile, Brown's plan would cut taxes for the richest 1 percent by 41 percent. Even assuming the 13 percent rate is adequate, CTJ calculates, taxes on the poorest fifth would increase 20 percent but drop 15 percent for the richest 1 percent.

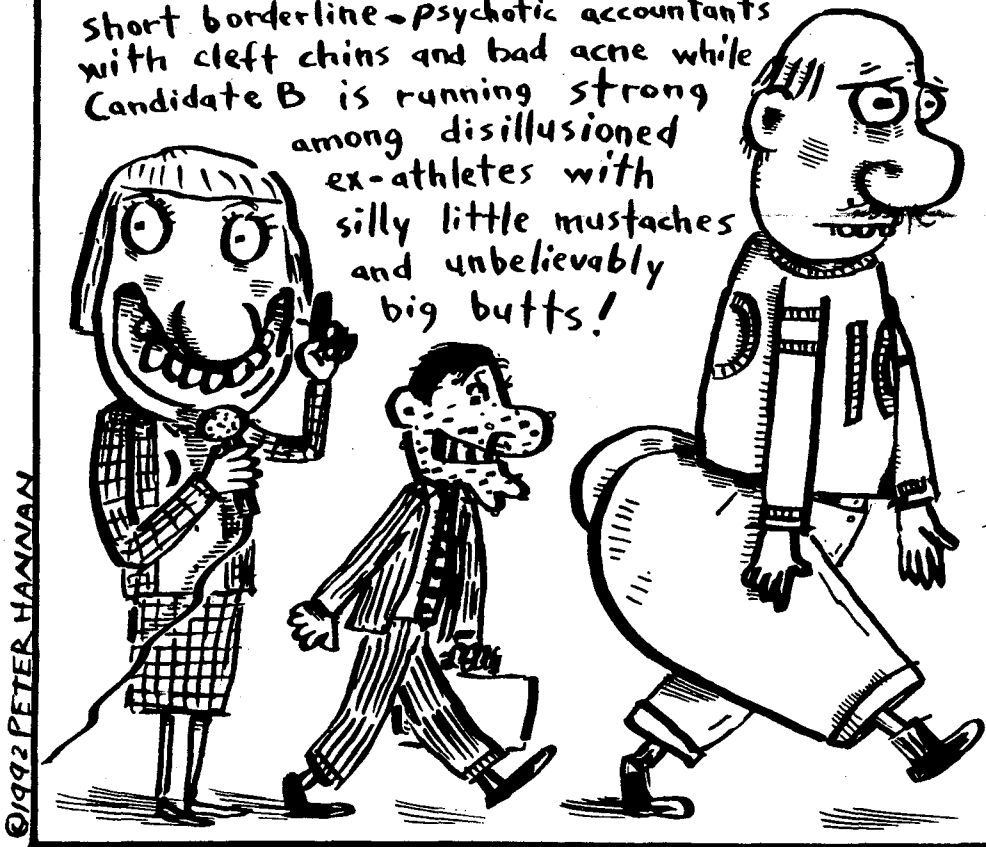
If Tsongas, Clinton or Bush had proposed Brown's "silver bullet for the '90s" tax plan, he'd be hounded off the public stage. But because of Brown's populist rhetoric and other economic proposals (and because he has so far been considered fringe), his tax

proposals have not been taken seriously. For Jerry Brown's sake, that's a blessing.

Without his wacky tax plan, Brown would be in a much better position to fashion a sharp debate over the links between corporate and economic power and the importance of stronger grass-roots democracy for both political and economic rejuvenation of the country. Nevertheless, Brown is a forceful, if sometimes irritating, advocate of many of the bold economic policies that the Democrats need to adopt—such as an industrial policy that stresses a high-tech push toward an environmentally sustainable economy. As the sole remaining competitor with Clinton's cautious technocratic tinkering, Brown will keep alive a battle of ideas in the struggle for the party's soul.

## The Adventures of a Huge Mouth, by Peter Hannan

There you have it! Our exclusive eyewitness poll shows that Candidate A does very well among short borderline-psychotic accountants with cleft chins and bad acne while Candidate B is running strong among disillusioned ex-athletes with silly little mustaches and unbelievably big butts!



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### NEW YORK

March 27-April 28

#### THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL

Fri., March 27, 8:00 p.m.—Women and Socialism: Gender's Subordination to Perestroika, a look at the place of gender in the restructuring of the formerly-socialist countries, by Dorothy Rosenberg, \$5.  
Sun., March 29, 5:00 p.m.—Perry Robinson in concert; \$5.

Mon., March 30 & Tues., March 31—Start of unit II of Introductory and Intermediate Spanish classes; new students welcome; two-hour sessions meeting twice a week; morning, afternoon and evening classes available; also Friday evening and Saturday morning classes meeting once a week; call or write for more information.

Tues., March 31, 8:00 p.m.—Feminist Theory: The Second Wave, taught by Lynn Chancer; second of five sessions; session 2: The Development of Radical and Cultural Feminism; \$35 for remaining four sessions or \$10 per individual session.

Sat., April 4, 1:00 p.m.—Radical History Walking Tour of Chelsea, led by Bruce Kayton; meets in front of the Chelsea Hotel, 222 West 23 St. (between 7 and 8 Avenues); \$6.

Sun., April 5, 5:00 p.m.—Frederick Lonborg-Holm Trio in concert; \$5.

Mon., April 6, 8:00 p.m.—Why Is There No Left in the Democratic Party?, a lecture by Francis Fox Piven; \$5.

Tues., April 7, 8:00 p.m.—Feminist Theory: The Second Wave, taught by Lynn Chancer; third of five sessions; session 3: Issues in Marxist and Socialist Feminisms; \$30 for remaining three sessions or \$10 per individual session.

Wed., April 8, 6:00 p.m.—American Economic History, taught by Marc Chandler; start of third of four five-session units; Unit III focuses on Corporate Reconstruction prior to World War II; \$50 per unit.

Fri., April 10, 6:30 p.m.—Pot Luck Dinner and Discussion; Admission: one dish.

Mon., April 13, 6:00 p.m.—Foundations of Marxism: Culture of Domination/Cultures of Resistance, taught by Jeremy Raw; first of ten sessions; free.

Tues., April 14, 8:00 p.m.—Feminist Theory: The Second Wave, taught by Lynn Chancer; fourth of five sessions; session 4: Sexuality Debates within the Feminist Movement: Toward a Theoretical and Political Synthesis; \$20 for remaining two sessions or \$10 per individual session.

Mon., April 20, 8:00 p.m.—Eurocentrism Re-examined, a lecture by Samir Amin; \$8.

Tues.-Thurs., April 21-23, 6:00-10:00 p.m.—Global Politics and National Strategies, an Intensive Seminar conducted by Samir Amin; Session I (April 21): Delinking: Strategies for Development in a Polycentric World; Session II (April 22): Intellectuals and Popular Struggles; Session III (April 23): Rethinking the Global Trend toward Democratization; \$195 for entire seminar (includes lecture of April 20), or \$75 per individual session. Call or write for more information.

Tues., April 21, 8:00 p.m.—Feminist Theory: The Second Wave, taught by Lynn Chancer; last of five sessions; session 5: Feminism, Postmodernism, and the "Third Wave": Where Do We Go from Here?; \$10.

Fri., April 24, 8:00 p.m.—Midnight & Sat., April 25 2:00-10:00 p.m. (performances every hour on the hour)—To Desire Peacefully Is to Fall Ill with Longing (The History of Corporations, Part V), a performance by Zone West; \$8.

Sun., April 26, 5:00 p.m.—Joe Fonda in concert; \$5.  
Tues., April 28, 8:00 p.m.—The Making of the Capitalist Class in Eastern Europe, a lecture by Daniel Singer; \$8.

Other Upcoming Intensive Seminars—Maria Helena Alves on the Brazilian Workers' Party (May 1-3); Stuart Hall on Capitalism and Culture (June 6-7); and Ernest Mandel on European Unification (June 16-18). Write or call for more information.

The New York Marxist School is in Manhattan at 79 Leonard St. (five blocks below Canal St. between Broadway and Church St.), New York, NY 10013. Scholarships for classes and low-income rates for lectures are always available. Call (212) 941-0332 for more information.

### April 24-26

The Tenth Annual Socialist Scholars Conference—"The New World Order?" Speakers will include Maria Elena Alves, Stanley Aronowitz, Bogdan Denitch, Boris Kagarlisky, L.A. Kaufman, Ernest Mandel, Jo-Ann Mort, Joseph Murphy, Major Owens, Frances Fox Piven, Daniel Singer, Cornel West, Ellen Willis and more. Pre-Registration: \$25, or \$15 student, low-income; at door: \$40, or \$20 student, low-income. Mail to: R.L. Norman, CUNY Democratic Socialists Club, Room 801, 33 West 42nd St., New York 10036. For information: (212) 560-0101.

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Vietnam Veterans Against the War 25th Anniversary. Celebrate the veterans' peace and justice movement, and the right of dissent in a democratic society. Memorial service, rally, concert by Country Joe. Call/write: Mike Gold / Edward Damato, VVAW, POB 74, Brooklyn, NY 11215. Telephone: (718) 788-2009.

### CHICAGO

#### April 5

Hear Lu Palmer at 10:00 a.m. and Aaron Freeman at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday at the 3rd Unitarian Church, Mayfield and Fulton. (312) 626-9385 or (708) 848-2750. Free admission.

#### April 22

The Chicago Chapter of the National Organization for Women's Health and Safety Committee presents a program meeting, "EMPOWERING WOMEN AGAINST RAPE." The program will address public issues of sexual violence against women and will include a demonstration of self-defense techniques. Begins at 6:00 p.m. at the Metropolitan YWCA, 180 N. Wabash, 3rd floor.

#### May 1

34th ANNUAL DEBS-THOMAS-HARRINGTON DINNER honoring Sue Purington, Executive Director of Chicago NOW, and Dr. Quentin Young, President of Physicians for a National Health Program. Featured speaker, Jose LaLuz, National Political Education Director, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union: "Beyond Free Trade: Building North American Labor Solidarity." Friday, May 1, at the Congress Hotel, 520 S. Michigan Ave. Cocktails: 6:00 p.m., Dinner: 7:00 p.m. Tickets \$35 by April 27th. A limited number of tickets available at the door for \$40. Contact Chicago DSA, 1608 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 973-6714.

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**WHY AFRICAN-AMERICANS ARE POLITICALLY DISENFRANCHISED** by Earl Ofari Hutchinson. Ofari's BiMonthly, March 1992, \$2.00; Box 2368, Inglewood, CA 90305.

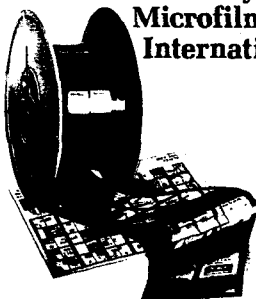
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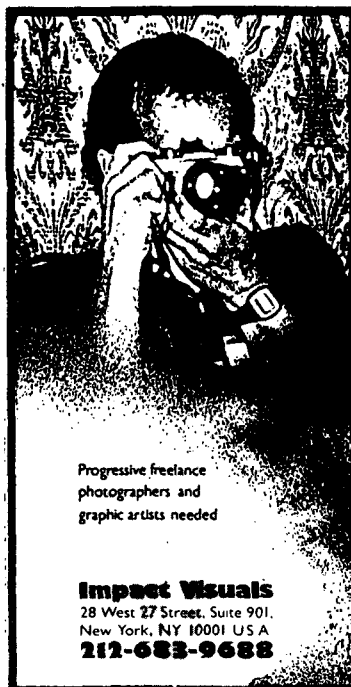
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## JEWISH CURRENTS March 1992 Issue

"Peace Process, Step by Step," editorial;  
"What's New in Eastern European Jewish Music," Adrienne Cooper;  
"A Jewish Girlhood in the Old West," Sadie Myers; "The Botwin Company in Spain," Albert Prago.

Single issue: \$2 plus 75¢ postage.  
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New York, NY 10003

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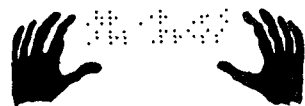
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**A**S ORGANIZATIONS USE VIDEO TO RAISE issues, communicate a message and tell their stories to highly targeted audiences, the forms of expression are adapting to particular needs. Following are some examples; each group's format is appropriate to its intended use, and each depends on a strong link with an audience that leaves the program ready to act. Organizations charge a moderate and sometimes even token fee for the videos.

**America's Defense Monitor.** A half-hour weekly series produced by the Center for Defense Information (CDI), now in its fifth year, this well-turned public affairs show boldly raises the questions that nightly news—not to mention the “reality” shows—let go begging. Why did Congress approve money for weapons systems the Pentagon doesn't even want? If your community has to convert from a military economy, where do you start? How many schools would a B-52 buy?

In 1992, *America's Defense Monitor* features a series of election specials, raising such issues as the cost of a defense-oriented economy; Star Wars today and tomorrow; the peace dividend; the future of the military; and the defense budget tomorrow. The programs are getting these issues into national debate; presidential campaigns have called CDI (1500 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20005, [202] 862-0700) for data after these programs have aired, says senior producer Sanford Gottlieb.

The series is now available on 101 public television stations (almost a third of them), largely through grass-roots efforts. “We have to campaign to get on stations,” says Gottlieb. For instance, in Milwaukee, persistent campaigns over months, making it clear that viewers wanted to contribute to a station that showed the program, finally won over the station.

Some public television stations, and PBS itself, find the show tainted by its connection with CDI, although its funding is from foundations and its format is strictly balanced (Heritage Foundation spokespeople often pop up on camera). “Where we're dealing with controversial subjects—and most of them are—we have a broad range of viewpoints to satisfy our own desire to do justice to a topic,” says Gottlieb. CDI, a 20-year-old research organization founded and directed by retired military officers, carefully guards its reputation for sober accuracy. It has also, expectably, become the leader in informed critique of military policies. And that makes some public television stations—such as one in San Diego, a big Navy town—hypercautious.

Indeed, what public television calls “advocacy programming”—a vague term that has as much to do with perception as reality—has been a headache of public broadcasting from the start, and it's only getting worse with the current Republican assault on public broadcasting. But the real question isn't whether *America's Defense Monitor* is advocacy or not. It's clearly advocacy for open, democratic debate on the best way to invest in national defense. The question is, where are the nation's journalists, for public and commercial television, when the hard questions need to be raised? “A lot of our mail is, ‘I can't see this kind of program anywhere else on television,’” says Gottlieb.

The series has an active life on the VCR as well. In universities, religious study groups, rural civic and social groups and



# NEWS that works

among peace organizations, tapes provide a platform for discussion. *America's Defense Monitor* is also available on some 600 cable systems through the interreligious satellite delivery service VISN and occasionally on some cable access channels.

**It's the Law.** Children's television is one of the more visible shames of a popular culture constructed around advertising. For more than two decades, Peggy Charren, founder of Action for Children's Television (20 University Road, Cambridge, MA 02138, [617] 876-6620), has fought to improve kids' TV. Finally, in 1990, Congress passed a law requiring broadcasters to air educational and informational children's programming and to limit commercials. (Regarding the act as her swan song, Charren has an-

nounced that ACT will close this year and pass the baton to other media activist groups.) In 15 snappy minutes, this video, directed at parent, teacher and citizen action groups, sketches the problem and urges pressure on local broadcasters. As Charren argues on camera, without pressure, the law won't mean much. But this tightly-produced mini-documentary (by Andrew Greenspan) gives citizens talking points, legal ground to stand on and a clear target for action.

**Keepers of the Dream.** Many unions open their conventions with a flashy video/slide celebration of (in any order) the union president, the latest technology and the newest union building—with the whole display costing tens, even hundreds of thousands

of dollars. For the opening event of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers' 1991 convention, attendees got a play about themselves.

This half-hour video restages the original dramatic reading (an Actors Equity production) that stirred union members to a standing ovation. It celebrates marking events from the union's history—the union's role in creating the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, the first major corporate campaign (against Shell in the early '70s), the longest lockout in labor history (at BASF), and the Karen Silkwood story—before setting out a vision for the '90s.

The dramatic reading, conceived and structured by OCAW Presidential Assistant Tony Mazzocchi and written by scriptwriter Larry Bogard with original music by Dick Weisman, deftly puts each of these issues in context. The segments reinforce the long-term strengths of OCAW (P.O. Box 2812, Denver, CO 80201): its ties to wider community networks and ability to go beyond traditional labor-management issues. The Silkwood segment reminds the viewers that union-busting put that tragedy in motion and reclaims Silkwood as a labor heroine. Finally, the play puts the members of the union—not its officers, buildings or friends in high places—in the forefront of the story. The staging is gracefully and efficiently low-tech—actors reading from scripts, backgrounded slide projections—and performances are unpretentiously expert. The union has now commissioned a full-length play on the life of Karen Silkwood, to open in Denver in summer 1993.

“I think there's a perception that working people don't respond to culture,” said Mazzocchi, “but the convention proved to us that there's a real hunger for live theater. This brings back part of the culture of the labor movement, a part that got lost for a long time.”

**Deadly Deception: General Electric, Nuclear Weapons and Our Environment.** Before you buy that GE lightbulb, maybe you want to see this half-hour video. Produced by veteran documentarian Debra Chasnoff for the corporate accountability organization INFACT (256 Hanover St., Boston, MA 02113, [800] 688-8797), it sharply contrasts GE's advertising claim (“We Bring Good Things to Life”) with the dismal and alarming record in worker safety and public health in its nuclear and weapons divisions. Interviews with ex-workers as well as relatives and neighbors of those whose lives were devastated brings the cost of GE's behavior home. The video is at least as fascinating in its focus on GE's image massaging through ads as it is wrenching in its analysis of GE's savage irresponsibility. It ends with a call to boycott GE products. Groups in Seattle, the Twin Cities and Tucson, among other cities, have used it to persuade individuals, hospitals (GE produces state-of-the-art medical equipment) and businesses to join the boycott. A national theatrical tour currently in progress will also lend visibility.

Also noted: **In Her Own Image: Films and Videos Empowering Women for the Future**, the latest in Media Network's series of guides to media on social issues and another solid, useful and attractive contribution at 40 pages, is available for a sliding-scale fee from Media Network, 39 W. 14th St., #403, New York, NY 10011, (212) 929-2663.

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